Dudley
CHRONICLE

Thursday, January 28, 2016 | Read by more than 53,000 people | Price when sold 60p

CALL FOR SPORTS CAR ROAD BAN

Report by Richard Guttridge

THE father of a 21-year-old woman who was killed by a driver as he raced at 100mph on a Black Country street has called for 'performance' cars to be banned from the roads.

Gerard McManus told MPs high-powered cars have 'no place on our roads' .

His daughter Rebecca, a former Stourbridge student from Oldbury, was killed in May 2014 after a Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution driven by Sukvinder Mannan crashed into her as she waited at a bus stop on Hagley Road West, Bearwood with friend Harriet Barnsley, who was seriously injured. Mannan was driving at 101mph in a 40mph zone.

Rebecca, a promising poet who had studied A-levels at King Edward VI College, had just completed a three-year degree in English.

Rebecca McManus

Garage manager Mannan, from Halesowen, was jailed for eight years after he admitted causing death by dangerous driving.

The driver he had been racing, Inderjit Singh, of Cranbourne Avenue, Ettingshall, Wolverhampton, was given a one-year jail term, after pleading guilty to dangerous driving in his BMW M3. He had pulled out of the race seconds before impact.

Test

Mr McManus urged MPs to act in a written submission to a House of Commons inquiry into road traffic laws.

He said the Mitsubishi Evolution was advertised as a 'sports' car. He wrote: "As Mitsubishi clearly state the Evo has been developed through decades of competing successfully at the highest level of international rallying, why is it on the road?"

"More and more cars are being produced with a racing specification, they will never go anywhere near a race track, I find that a bit puzzling because surely the driver of these powerful cars will want to test the vehicle, but where? Well, on our roads obviously.

"Thirty mph speed limit, 40mph speed limit? It will not matter, and myself like so many road users will watch in horror as cars are driven at speed, or raced with others with no consideration for others or the consequences.

"Those behind the wheel are so often totally immature."

Mr McManus called for a halt to marketing being able to refer to performance or speed and people wishing to drive them needing a special category licence which allows them to drive on a racetrack.

COLLEGE MARKS HIGH SCHOOL HERITAGE AT CAMPUS

Former Dudley Girls High students Mauren Du-Mont, aged 78 and former classmate Jean Weston, also 78, with the date stone

TWO historic stones commemorating the former Dudley Girls High School have come out of storage and are being unveiled in the grounds of the town's new college – almost 105 years to the week they were first put in place.

The date stone and the foundation stone have been kept in safe storage by Dudley Council since 1996 when the girls high school building was demolished.

Now they are back in place on the site of the former school whose alumni included Wimbledon tennis ace Dorothy Round, the BBC news reader Sue Lawley and former Liberal Democrat MP Baroness Tonge of Kew.

Dudley Girls High School opened on December 8, 1910, in Priory Road. It served Dudley and its surrounding area for 65 years, before it merged with Dudley Grammar School and the Park Secondary Modern School to form The Dudley School in September 1975.

Former student Maureen Du-Mont, 78, said: "I was at school here from 1948 to 1955 and it was a marvellous place. I was deputy head girl and I have a lot to thank the school for, it was very forward-looking.

"Twice a year we have a Dudley Girls High reunion which is always well attended. The new college buildings look great and I am glad that this site is still all about education.

"It is just wonderful that these stones have been put back as a reminder of the old school."

Lowell Williams, Dudley College principal, said: "We have these wonderful new facilities in Dudley for students but it is important that we don't forget our past and appreciate the history of the site that our new college campus is on."

DEATH

Medics fought to save accident victim

A MAN has died after an accident at a delivery firm depot in Brierley Hill. The tragedy happened at Tuffnells Parcel Express, on The Wallows Industrial Estate.

Paramedics fought to save the man but he died at the scene after suffering a 'traumatic cardiac arrest'.

Emergency services were called to the premises in Fens Pool Avenue at around 9.50pm on Friday. Ambulance service spokesman John Hawker said: "Advanced life support was carried out at the scene by medics but despite everyone's best efforts, nothing could be done to save the man."

CRIME

Shotgun and £20k stolen in burglary

A SHOTGUN, jewellery worth around £8,000 and £20,000 cash were stolen during a raid on a Kingswinford house.

Burglars broke into the house in Ploverdale Crescent through a kitchen window. A Browning Super Sport 325 shotgun and 70 shotgun cartridges were taken with the cash and jewellery.

A mobile phone, iPads and a games console were also taken between 1.30pm and 9pm on Wednesday.

Anyone with information should call police on 101.

ROADWORKS

Quarry route repairs will last for a week

MOTORISTS are facing more misery on the roads with a new set of roadworks lasting a week near to an old quarry.

Ward councillor Dave Tyler said he had been in touch with highways engineers for 'a number of years' about the poor state of Enville Road, Wall Heath, where he says heavy vehicles using the quarry, which closed last year, have caused problems.

Substantial resurfacing works will now take place on the stretch of road between Swindon Road and Chapel Street. Enville Road was a key access route for trucks heading to the quarry, which operated on-and-off for 85 years.

INSIDE

SCHOOLS TOP OF THEIR CLASS

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Man killed by car was 'lying in road'

Run over — Anthony Maskell

A FATHER-OF-TWO was already lying in the road when he was run over and killed by a car that failed to stop, an inquest heard.

Anthony Maskell, 50, was found on Birchfield Lane, Oldbury, after being run over by a silver Nissan Micra.

Smethwick Coroners Court heard how Mr Maskell of Westgate Terrace, Rowley Regis, died from a serious and head injury on July 30.

The coroner ruled his death was as a result of a road traffic accident.

Mr Maskell, known as Tony to friends and family, worked as a lorry driver. He had been drinking the night of the accident but the court heard it was unclear exactly how he had ended up in the road.

Black Country Coroner Zafar Siddique said: "Mr Maskell had been socialising, drinking, and bottles of cider were found with him.

Dual-carriageway

"He had attempted to cross the dual-carriageway on Birchfield Lane. It was not clear whether he had been to a public house but for some reason he was lying in the road.

"A Nissan Micra was caught on CCTV in the area and drove over him. Sadly he received a catastrophic head injury and died in Queen Elizabeth Hospital."

Mr Siddique said: "It is unclear exactly how he ended up lying in the road.

"On balance he died from a road traffic collision but I have not come to the conclusion it was an accidental death."

The search continues for the driver of the silver 2000/2003 Nissan Micra.

Mr Maskell's father, David, said: "Anyone with a bit of decency would have stopped."

Borough's schools come top of class for GCSEs

SCHOOLS in Dudley have come top of the pile for GCSE and A-level results in the Black Country for the second year running, according to the latest figures.

Dudley was top but the borough slipped down the rankings compared with last year's figures.

A total of 53 per cent of pupils gained five or more GCSEs at A*-C including English and maths, a slight fall on last year's figure of 53.3 per cent.

Old Swinford Hospital School was the leading performer for the second year running with 81 per cent of pupils achieving benchmark grades.

Paul Kilbride, head of the school in Heath Lane, Stourbridge, said: "The stats reflect the hard work of the students and the staff.

Effort

"The kids put so much time and effort into their work. They are a credit to themselves and the school."

Summerhill School in Kingswinford came second on 70 per cent, while Bishop Milner Catholic College in Dudley and Windsor High School in Halesowen both saw 69 per cent of pupils gain the benchmark grades.

Windsor High headteacher Stephen Lanckham, said: "We have been delighted with another set of excellent results and recognise that they represent the hard work, commitment and collaboration of staff and students. Well done to all concerned."

Castle High School and Visual Arts College came 19th in the table with 35 per cent of 113 pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at A* to C, including English and maths.

The Coseley School, which is undergoing a consultation over its future, slumped down the tables to 20th place with just 31 per cent of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at A*-C including English and maths.

The only school below Coseley School was the Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School in Stourbridge, where none of the 21 pupils who took GCSEs managed to gain benchmark grades.

Delighted – Windsor High School headteacher Stephen Lanckham with pupils at the school at Richmond Street, Halesowen

Across the borough 53 per cent of pupils taking their exams in 2015 gained the Government's benchmark of five or more GCSEs at A* to C, including English and mathematics – a slight drop from the previous year's results.

Dudley sits in 117th position in the national table for GCSEs. Last year the borough was 114th. The figures, which were released last week by the Department for Education, also showed that Dudley came 36th out of 152 local authorities for A-level results.

Councillor Ian Cooper, cabinet member for children's services, vowed that the council would continue to build on the improvements shown by its schools in recent years.

He said: "While we are yet to receive the final validated results, we are pleased that early indications show that we have maintained our standards in GCSE attainment. We will continue to build on this over the next 12 months and support our schools and our young people in achieving the very best."

The borough had improved primary school performance last year.

Graffiti is daubed on the home of governor

"I'M devastated. I just don't understand why this has happened."

The words of Coseley School governor Sue Ridney after vandals daubed graffiti across the windows of her home and poured used engine oil across her front garden.

Mrs Ridney, who is chairman of the at-risk school's interim executive board, returned to her house in Gough Road, Coseley, to find that vandals had struck.

"It was a complete shock," the 64-year-old said. "I could see the word 'lies' had been sprayed across the window and then I noticed the mess on the front garden. There was old engine oil everywhere.

West Midlands Police spokeswoman Joanne Hunt said an investigation had been launched.

Dudley Council announced earlier this month that 528-pupil Coseley School may be shut down due to falling pupil numbers, poor academic results and a growing financial deficit.

Among the options being considered is a phased closure of the school in which pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 would be moved, with those in Year 10 staying put until they complete their studies.

Plans to open a technical college or studio school on the site have been mooted. The proposed closure has sparked fury among parents, who have started a campaign to keep the school open (see page 13). Mrs Ridney added: "If I have been targeted because of what is going on at the school then people are getting the wrong end of the stick."

Art works go on show at glass cone

THE Brierley Hill Society of Artists has returned with another exhibition at the Red House Glass Cone.

The show features over 75 original framed pieces of artwork, plus many unframed prints using watercolours, mixed media and acrylic.

Visitors will see a wide variety of works, covering local scenes like the cone itself, Himley Hall, Stewponey Locks, Ludlow and Bridgnorth to places further afield.

Other topics include animals, flowers, landscapes and even a cartoon of TV presenter and former MP Michael Portillo during a visit to the cone.

All of the work on display is for sale and prices start at £15. There is also a children's picture section. The exhibition will run until March 6.

Virgin jobs threat in group's revamp

AROUND 900 jobs are under threat at telecoms giant Virgin Media, after it announced plans for a major overhaul of the group. Virgin employs around 1,000 at its Eagle Court site in Birmingham and another 40 at The Waterfront in Brierley Hill.

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Work starts on easing Merry Hill congestion

A £500,000 road and travel scheme to improve bus services and ease traffic jams around Merry Hill shopping centre has now started.

The five-month project, which includes traffic light improvements and upgrades to bus shelters with the latest digital passenger information, started last week on High Street, Quarry Bank, near the junction with Coppice Lane.

An overhaul of the lights next to the popular shopping venue has been unveiled by Dudley Council bosses in an effort to cut down on congestion. Any problems at the ageing traffic signals can lead to massive tailbacks on the roads network around Merry Hill.

Council chiefs have successfully applied to Centro for £455,000 from its Better Bus Area Fund cash pot. The remaining £110,000 came from the council's Integrated Transport Block Allocation.

At the same time, there will be major resurfacing programme, which will be funded out of the £9 million pot the council was awarded through the Department for Transport's Challenge Fund and will bring improvements for all road users.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "It is a really busy stretch of road down there, so it is necessary the traffic lights need to be kept working at all times. The number of times they break down is too much and they are becoming very unreliable. We saw an opportunity for some funding, bid for it and got it."

Children can get active at centre

CHILDREN can take part in fun activities at Crystal Leisure Centre in Stourbridge during half term.

The Dudley Council-owned facility in Bell Street will be hosting a week of special events from February 15 to 21, including gymnastics and roller disco.

The swimming pool, complete with slides, will be open daily with the roller disco on Monday afternoon, one-hour craft sessions on the Tuesday and trampolining classes on the Tuesday and Friday.

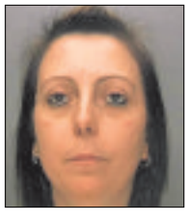
Trampolining sessions are running for children aged five to 15 on February 16 at 10 and 11am and February 19 at 1 and 3pm for beginners and February 16 at 12 and 1pm for those who are advanced. Classes cost £5.80 per session and must be booked.

Hall is the venue for wedding fair

A WEDDING fair is being held in Himley Hall on Sunday, February 7.

The event, from 10.30am to 4pm, includes bridal fashion shows at 11am, 1pm and 3pm. There will also be displays. Admission is £1.

Woman jailed after injuring officers



Jailed – Angela Miller

A WOMAN driver who left two police officers with serious injuries after ploughing into them in Tipton has been jailed.

Angela Miller crashed into the officers and a Mercedes they had pulled over for a routine stop check on the A461 Dudley Port.

Her VW Golf GTI then collided with the back of a marked police van which had its blue lights flashing.

Miller was suspected of being under the influence of alcohol but refused to give blood for analysis. She was also taken to hospital after the collision.

The 38-year-old of Newpool Road, Cradley Heath, admitted failing to provide a blood sample and was sentenced to a five-month jail term at Sandwell Magistrates Court. She was also banned from driving for three years and 10 weeks.

The officers, who are both in their 40s and based in Sandwell, are still recovering from their leg injuries following the collision that occurred at 1.35am on January 4 last year.

In the crash the two officers were thrown into the air after the Golf hit the Mercedes and the police van, said West Midlands Police spokeswoman Deborah Edmonds. .

Both officers suffered broken legs and one was knocked unconscious.

Miller was trapped in the wreckage of her car.

The 46-year-old officer has since returned to restricted duties but his 44-year-old colleague continues to be treated for leg injuries and has not yet returned to work.

Pc Phil Robins, of the West Midlands Police regional collision investigation unit, said: "This was the maximum custodial sentence that the judge could give her and in doing so he stated that he wanted this to serve as a deterrent to others."

Speeding killer driver gets 40 months prison

A MOTORIST who mowed down and killed a pedestrian has been jailed for more than three years.

Omar Tariq, aged 31, of Denton Road, Stourbridge, had been driving his girlfriend's courtesy car at speeds of up to 93mph shortly before the tragedy.

His estimated speed at the moment of impact was 61mph – more than 20mph over the speed limit – as he braked to avoid hitting 39-year-old Peter Price, who was crossing Hagley Road West at Quinton.

Sixteen members of the victim's family were at Wolverhampton Crown Court for the sentencing on Monday.

Tariq had denied being at the wheel of the Mercedes E250, claiming his girlfriend had been driving but his lie unravelled during police interviews, said Mr Paul Spratt, prosecuting. He had driven on for a third of a mile after the accident, in November 2014, before phoning police.

Banned

Defending, Mr Paul Mytton, said Tariq had not been penalised for speeding or any other motoring offence in 13 years of driving.

Tariq pleaded guilty to causing death by dangerous driving and not being insured to drive the car. He was jailed for three years and four months and banned from driving for five years.

Judge James Burbidge read testimonials from Tariq's relatives and colleagues, and a letter from the defendant himself setting out his feelings of remorse. He also read impact statements from Mr Price's family and friends.

The judge said: "This is a sad and tragic case. Mr Price's death has been a devastating blow to many." He described Tariq's speed as 'grossly excessive', particularly in a built-up area in a car he was not familiar with, but said there were 'powerful' mitigating circumstances.

"Whether you were seeking to put this sporty-type vehicle through its paces, I do not know. But you were of exemplary character. I accept that this has affected you deeply and that others speak highly of your integrity," said the judge.

Tariq's girlfriend, health and safety officer 23-year-old Parvinder Ubhi, of Jardine Close, Stourbridge, pleaded guilty to permitting use of the vehicle without valid insurance and obstructing police by falsely claiming she was driving. She received a 12-month community order and disqualified from driving for a year.

Artist Emma Callaghan, of Tividale, will have some of her work showcased in an exhibition at the highly-rated Brick Lane Gallery in east London

Emma has brush with fame at gallery

AN aspiring artist is looking to make her way in the creative world with her first official exhibition next month — at a trendy London gallery.

Emma Callaghan, aged 22, from Tividale, is preparing work for her first official exhibition at The Brick Lane Gallery in Shoreditch, London, from February 16 to 29.

Emma, who studied at Falmouth University, graduated in 2015 with a 2:1 BA Hons Degree in Fine Art.

Her work includes a multi-disciplinary approach to art, exploring such themes memory, time, environment and historical events.

Some of her work was inspired by her grandmother's dementia.

Emma, who works for West Bromwich Building Society, hopes to make more people aware of dementia, Alzheimer's and depression.

She said: "It's something I've been working towards for a very long time, so to have my work displayed in a gallery, especially in the iconic area of Brick Lane, is fantastic."

Her pieces have sold to art collectors.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Parliament hears of Himley dog ban

DUDLEY South MP Mike Wood has urged his colleagues in Parliament to hold a debate over the new ban stopping dog walkers taking their animals into parts of Himley Park.

Dudley Council is installing signs in the grounds of Himley Hall (see page 15) to create dog-free zones, to encourage family outings and picnics.

Leader of the House, Chris Grayling MP, said in response: "My honourable Friend has made an important point about his constituency. I am sure that his comments will have been heard by his local authority."

Council offering help for homeless

DUDLEY Council is helping people who face sleeping rough.

The authority says anyone at risk of sleeping rough, or residents worried about someone at risk, can contact their homeless prevention and response team 24 hours a day. The team will look for emergency housing solutions and work with people to resolve their housing needs. Housing boss Councillor Gaye Partridge said: "Housing is fundamental to individual and community wellbeing."

Call Dudley Council Plus on 0300 555 2345.

Brighter crossing outside school

AN upgrade to a zebra crossing outside a Wordsley school has been completed. The new improved LED crossing, outside Belle Vue School, makes the crossing easily visible during dark winter mornings and nights.

Councillor Paul Brothwood, who has been campaigning for road safety measures, said: "Having worked with PCSOs on local speed watch events on Lawnswood Road, I am pleased to report that the upgrade to the zebra crossing has now been completed."

Libraries offer to loan out energy monitors

RESIDENTS in Dudley are being offered free use of energy monitors from their local library to keep track of how much energy their appliances use.

The scheme, sponsored by Dudley libraries and the Winter Warmth campaign, is designed to help people save money. The monitors can be borrowed free-of-charge by Dudley libraries members.

For advice and information about Winter Warmth phone (01384) 817086.

Station parking closed

MOTORISTS using a car park at Old Hill train station have been warned to expect disruption due to resurfacing works. Work at the station will run from February 1 to 12 with the number of spaces reduced. The car park will be closed completely on February 12 under plans revealed by Centro.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

THINGS on your bathroom shelf. Ever noticed how similar a tube of Oral-B toothpaste is to a tube of Neutrogena hand cream? Deeply unpleasant start to the day.

MUCH has been written and spoken about Jeremy Corbyn's plan for nuclear submarines without nuclear missiles. I like this little analogy from a Scottish website: "I took the blades out of my kitchen knives to see how they'd work. I could still squish tomatoes with the handle but my neighbours called me a ***** and are now parking on my driveway."

MEANWHILE, it emerges Mr Corbyn calls his family cat El Gato which is simply Spanish for "the Cat." We have a similar nameless arrangement at Chateau Rhodes where the resident tabby who wandered in seven years ago may be addressed in the course of a day as Puss, Pusskin, The Prince, Killer, Poppet, Chick, Button, Sweetie, Fuzzy Face, Sausage and Mate but is usually known as The Cat.

AFTER the massive coverage following the deaths of Mr Lemmy from Motorhead and Mr Bowie from Mars, you might think the media has exhausted their ability to go over the top. Not a bit of it. According to Radio 4 news at 11pm last Monday, the most important global event of the day, was the death of Glen Frey of The Eagles.

THE full veil, the medieval symbol of male ownership of women, is alien to British culture and an affront to equality. Like all religious trappings it sends out the divisive message: "I am different from you. I am better than you," which is not a big step from saying: "You are lower than me. You are worth less than me." At a time when we are at war with people who make their women wear the veil, to see it paraded in British streets is as offensive and threatening as seeing someone strolling through London in 1940 in the black uniform of Hitler's SS. We cannot ban the full veil by law. The essential freedom to wear what we choose is too precious to be extinguished. Yet David Cameron's declaration that he will support hospitals, schools, colleges and other places which insist on the "proper and sensible" measure of faces being visible is a welcome step. As the Tory MP Philip Hollobone puts it: "I don't want to live in a country where a police officer is veiled, where a newsreader is veiled, where a nurse or doctor is veiled." For the sake of freedom we cannot ban the full veil. But in the name of freedom we can despise it.

SCREECHING like a banshee, Sarah Palin pledges her support to Donald Trump. The Trump and the Chump. I can't think of a time when Hillary Clinton looked so appealing.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Finance boss says authority not in crisis

DUDLEY Council is not in a financial crisis despite a nearly four per cent increase on council tax for the next three years, says the authority's finance boss.

Plans to increase the tax were recommended for approval by members at Dudley Council's cabinet meeting on last week.

Despite the fcash-strapped council facing a deficit of £23 million by 2019/20 if additional savings are not found, cabinet member for finance and legal services Councillor David Sparks insisted that they were 'not facing a crisis'.

He said: "I would like to make it clear that we should not talk ourselves into a crisis. Because ultimately there is no crisis. There has been a number of improvements to our forecast but even so the financial challenge Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council faces is very serious."

He added that the borough's residents would continue to pay the lowest council tax rates in the region, despite an increase in council tax for the first time in six years.

Lowest

"It will still leave us with the lowest council tax in the West Midlands and this is something we should be pleased about."

The increase would work out to be an extra 77p per week — or £40.04p per year — for people living in Band C properties.

Council leader Councillor Peter Lowe said: "We have worked relentlessly and left no stone unturned in a bid to plug the funding gap we have faced due to Government funding."

Super-council needs more powers – MP

By Peter Madeley

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has called on the Chancellor to give 'greater powers and more funding' to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

Labour MP Mr Austin urged George Osborne to give the WMCA more freedom over job creation, housing, transport and training.

Last year's devolution deal signed off by Mr Osborne paved the way for the WMCA, which could lead to more than £1bn of Government investment and a metro mayor.

Speaking at Treasury Questions, Mr Austin said he wanted to see a final deal that would devolve 'very significant powers' to the West Midlands.

Free

"The best way to support manufacturing businesses in the Midlands would be to free the region from London's control," he said. "The region has been stifled by Whitehall for far too long.

"If he gives us the powers and funds we need to strengthen the economy, to develop brownfield sites and tackle congestion, we will deliver more jobs, better skills, quicker transport and new homes."

Mr Osborne said that the West Midlands devolution deal would be 'one of the most exciting steps forward in the devolution of power in this country'.

Meanwhile, UKIP has vowed to continue its fight against the formation of the combined authority.

The party has urged people to get involved in the public consultation that has been launched over the WMCA, which includes Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall, Dudley, Coventry, Solihull and Birmingham.

Wordsley Councillor Paul Brothwood, said: "Local people need to know the downsides of handing powers over to a metro mayor and giving more power to a cash-strapped Birmingham."

A thrilling night at the circus for Ayana

Ayana and her mother Adele Salmon meets Emilion Delbosq, from Newlife Foundation, and circus performers

A THREE-YEAR-OLD girl suffering with epilepsy and visual impairment enjoyed a magical day out at the circus.

Ayana Salmon, from Wolverhampton, met star performers first-hand after they dazzled crowds in Brierley Hill with circus skills and the story of Pinocchio.

She had received the tickets along with her parents and sisters from Cannock-based charity Newlife Foundation.

Mother Adele, aged 34, praised the show. "I think it was brilliant," she said. "It was the first time all of us have been to a circus. Ayana really enjoyed it, she was quiet throughout and that is a really good sign."

Ayana suffers with a complex condition that she has had from birth. It includes hydrocephalus, epilepsy, a visual impairment and developmental delay, which has required many visits to hospital.

She went along with to the show with her parents and two sisters, aged 13 and 11. The show, called Pinocchio Joins The Circus, was held at Brierley Hill Civic Hall and was put on by the touringcompany Circus Starr.

Anaya went on stage during the interval to meet the acts.

Anya and her family received their tickets through the partnership of the circus and Newlife Foundation, which has previously provided Anya with equipment.

Newlife Foundation is the UK's largest charity that funds specialist equipment for children with disabilities.

Pensioner hurt after fall into car park drain

A PENSIONER was hurt when a metal drain cover gave way on a car park at Merry Hill shopping centre.

Jean Shipley was walking back to her car having left the Odeon cinema when she stepped on the loose grate, her foot falling through the gap.

She suffered a cut and swelling to her foot and was left in pain for weeks.

The 72-year-old, from Kingswinford, was left furious by what happened and said the drain cover was still loose when she went back to the cinema some weeks later.

She said: "I came down the ramp going to the car and my foot went down the hole in the drain. It was a bit of a shock really. It was badly bruised. I was in a lot of pain.

"I went back to the cinema to report it. The manageress came out and reached inside and retrieved the cover and put it back. She said it was nothing to do with the cinema and that Merry Hill looks after the site."

Mrs Shipley said she was told by Merry Hill officials that safety checks are regularly carried out at its car parks. She turned down an offer of a £20 gift voucher.

She added: "It could happen again. The drain cover was not secure, it was very loose. Any car going over it could dislodge it again. I think it should have been spotted."

Merry Hill spokesman Jonathan Day said: "Customer safety is always our number one priority and we have already investigated the matter and are working hard to resolve the cause of the incident."

Thousands attend theatre screenings

THOUSANDS of people have flocked to a Stourbridge venue to see West End shows screened live on screen

Actors such as Dame Judi Dench and Benedict Cumberbatch have been beamed before audiences at sell-outs shows at Stourbridge Town Hall ever since a special screen was brought last September with more than 3,000 tickets have been sold.

The seven-metre wide screen receives both live and recorded London performances, called 'encore' showings, as well as movies for the venue's regular matinees.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "The National Theatre Live Screen is providing to be an immensely popular project in the borough."

A comedy triple bill for Brierley Hill Civic

A TRIPLE bill of comedy acts will bring laughs to Brierley Hill Civic Hall in the summer. The venue will present Black Country comics The Fizzogs, Doc Brown and Kerry Godliman on July 16. Early bird tickets are £12.50 on 0870 320 7000.

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on **0800 61 21 118** and he'll be happy to help!

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Sex offender has lost his damages bid for jail recall

A CHILD sex offender who was sent back to jail when a sniffer dog indicated cannabis was in his hostel room has lost a bid for financial damages.

Donald Burton, of Worcester Road, Dudley, was recalled to prison for a further 17 months after the dog sniffed out the remnants of spliffs in an ashtray.

Burton, aged 42, claimed there was no direct evidence he had been using drugs at the hostel in Stonnall Road, Aldridge, following his release from jail for sex crimes.

He had been jailed for seven years at Birmingham Crown Court in 2004 with an extended licence period of three years.

But he claimed at the High Court last week that his recall was wrong and he had been falsely imprisoned by the Ministry of Justice.

Burton vehemently denied using drugs at the hostel but admitted he had taken cannabis in the past.

Mr Stephen Field, defending, said Burton was eventually released again on May 11, 2009, having spent an extra 510 days in prison he should never have served.

The court heard that when Burton was released the parole board had concluded his recall had not been justified.

Mr Field said it meant his recall was unlawful and his incarceration amounted to false imprisonment.

But Mr Justice William Davis rejected his claim for thousands of pounds in damages, saying the Ministry of Justice officer who approved Burton's recall in December 2007 had been correct.

He said: "The crucial issue is whether there were reasonable grounds for concluding that he had been using cannabis at the premises. In my judgment, on the material placed before the relevant official, there were such reasonable grounds.

Car smashes into brick garden wall

A CAR careered across a front driveway before smashing into a brick wall in Stourbridge.

The Mercedes ploughed through the wall in Heath Farm Road close to the junction with Whittington Road. It ended up across the driveway while debris was strewn across the drive. Another car involved in the incident was unscathed.

No-one was injured in the accident at around 11.20am on Friday.

Music memorabilia and vinyl at fair

A RECORD fair will be returning to Stourbridge on Saturday.

The Kiki and Henry sale is being held in two rooms at The Talbot Hotel, Stourbridge High Street, from 11am to 4pm.

Drink-drive shame for traffic policeman

Pc Chris Blount arriving at court

A POLICE officer who led campaigns targeting drink-drivers has admitted driving while nearly three times the legal alcohol limit.

Pc Chris Blount, of Rowan Road, Sedgley, was on Monday banned from the road and fined £1,425 by magistrates. He was spotted by patrolling officers struggling to control his Vauxhall Mokka on the Black Country Route in Wolverhampton.

Officers said the 49-year-old was 'severely' unsteady and his speech was slurred after being pulled over on November 6 last year. He was taken to a police station where a breathalyser test recorded that he was nearly three times the drink-drive limit.

Appearing before magistrates in Wolverhampton, Blount admitted one count of drink-driving. He was disqualified from driving for two years and told to pay a £120 victim surcharge and £135 costs.

West Midlands Police said the officer was off work and would face disciplinary proceedings.

Pc Blount is a member of the force's Regional Collision Investigation Unit. He once described drink drivers as a 'menace' and led the force's annual crackdown on festive drink-driving.

Chris Coughlan, prosecuting, said officers saw Blount's car travelling slowly. After seeing the driver was struggling to control the car, officers pulled him over.

Adrian Keeling, defending, said his client was a man of exemplary character, who had served as an officer for 27 years, and had no effective recollection of what happened.

He added that Pc Blount was divorced and had been living in police accommodation.

Patients concerned over branch surgery closures

PATIENTS are concerned after two GP practices revealed plans to close branch surgeries.

A decision has been made to close Wordsley Green Medical Practice and Lower Gornal Medical Practice will be discussed next month.

Some patients have objected over concerns about accessibility by public transport and staffing.

Wordsley Green Medical Practice runs its main health centre in The Green, Wordsley, but will now close its branch surgery in Market Street, Kingswinford, on March 14. Letters will be sent to all patients about the closure.

The decision for closure, which was made at a Dudley CCG meeting on Friday afternoon, came as bosses stated the branch was no longer fit for purpose and didn't provide minor surgery and family planning services.

Spokeswoman, Laura Broster, said: "We intend this to benefit patients and improve services, including adding more consultation rooms. This could be viewed as making cuts or to actually make things better."

A proposal has also been tabled by Lower Gornal Medical Practice to close its Masefield Road branch.

Overall 9,789 patients are served by the two surgeries, according to a report going before Dudley CCG's Primary Care Commissioning Committee.

Loss

The report says around 1,350 patients use Market Street and many already attend the Wordsley Green for some surgeries. Officials from the practice said the branch is being run at a loss and a 'substantial' amount of investment would be needed to bring the site up to standard. The lease for the building is up at the end of March. Staff from the branch surgery would transfer to Wordsley Green. Some 36 patients raised objections to the closure.

Dudley CCG primary care contracts manager, Julie Robinson, said in the report: "The underlying principle for the CCG to consider when any such proposal is made to them is has the applicant been able to clearly demonstrate the grounds for closure and have they fully considered any impact on the contractors registered population."

At Lower Gornal, a petition has been received from 316 patients objecting to the closure. A meeting will be held on February 19.

Auschwitz drawings on display

Robert Perry and Dudley North MP Ian Austin with one of the artist's images of Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp

POIGNANT and moving drawings of Auschwitz by a Black Country artist are being displayed at Dudley College's Broadway Campus, in the run-up to a Holocaust Memorial Service.

Stourbridge artist Robert Perry created the work during a two-week trip to Auschwitz in 1997. The former Nazi concentration camp in Poland is preserved as a memorial to those who died there.

Setting off with only his drawing and painting equipment, cameras, a phrase-book and a map, Robert headed for Auschwitz, travelling for three days in his Renault van, which has clocked up a staggering 268,000 miles over the course of his painting career.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin first saw Robert's work at Dudley Museum and Art Gallery, and invited him to team up with the college to have his Holocaust work displayed there before the borough's annual Holocaust memorial service.

That will take place at the college's Broadway campus tomorrow (Friday), at 12.30pm, when death camp survivor Susan Pollack speaks about her experiences.

Robert said: "Auschwitz is a very moving and grim place. Everybody should visit Auschwitz at least once. These have to be some of my darkest pieces of work."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Double by-election in borough wards

RESIDENTS in two Dudley wards will be heading for the polls next month in a double by-election.

The by-elections have been called in the St James's ward and the Kingswinford North and Wall Heath ward on February 25.

Councillor Mary Roberts, who represented St James's, died in November. Natalie Neal stood down from her position as councillor for Kingswinford North and Wall Heath last month for personal reasons.

Poll cards will be delivered to 12,000 homes over the next few days.

Former church will be a boxing club

A FORMER church will be turned into a boxing club, after plans were given the green light.

Council planners have given the go-ahead to Brooklands Boxing Club's scheme for the old Mount Tabor Methodist Church in Sedgley Road, Woodsetton.

The building has not been used for about a decade, according to the planning application.

A boxing ring will be installed on the ground floor, with evening sessions taking place from Monday to Friday.

Billy gives talk on history at library

A BLACK Country raconteur will give a talk on the region's history next month.

Billy Spakemon's talk, entitled 'Two Blokes Two, Chairs an a Chap called John' takes place at 3.15pm on Tuesday, February 23, at Dudley Library, St James's Road.

It will take place on the second floor meeting room at the library and admission is £3.

For more information call (01384) 815560.

Memories and stories to be told at centre

STORYTELLING sessions and reminiscences of the past are being held on the first Monday of each month at Lye Community Centre.

The events are free at the centre on Cross Walks, with the first story session on Monday, February 1, at 2.30pm, where the corner shops of the past will be discussed.

It will be hosted by Christine Squires, the centre's new manager, and Councillor Gaye Partridge will talk about local shops in the past.

Disco in aid of woods

GO and get your boogie shoes for a 1960s and 70s disco being heldin Smethwick next month to raise funds for Warley Woods Community Trust.

The event is on Friday, February 5, from 7.30pm until midnight, at Thimblemill Rec on Thimblemill Road. Tickets are £5, call 0121 4292 440.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Nazis didn't hand out free meal wristbands

LYNX House is a service for asylum seekers in Cardiff. Among many things, it provides free food for anybody who wears a wristband to prove they are entitled to it. Or at least it was until this week.

Now you might think that is not a bad arrangement. In fact, it would not entirely surprise me if a few cheeky chappies of the Benefits Street persuasion started rummaging around their drawers for that old Alton Towers wristband in the hope of getting a bit of free grub.

But incredibly, the policy has been abandoned after some of the asylum seekers complained it was undignified. The Welsh Refugee Council compared it to the branding of Jews in Nazi Germany. Similar claims were made last week, when it emerged a property company in Middlesbrough had been putting up asylum seekers in houses which had red doors.

Yesterday marked National Holocaust Memorial Day, when Britain remembers the millions of Jews, and other groups, who suffered unimaginable persecution in Hitler's Germany. Some perished in the gas chambers. Others died in squalid slave labour camps. Female victims had their hair hacked off to make socks for the German Army. Minor breaches of camp rules were punished in ways probably not appropriate to describe here.

I know this because I was privileged to visit Auschwitz last year, and over the years I have met several survivors who have lived through things I cannot begin to understand.

The Nazis didn't offer their victims rent-free terraced houses with shiny red doors. And the yellow stars worn by Hitler's victims did not entitle them to a free buffet.

The horrors of what I saw at Auschwitz will never leave me. And I can't begin to tell you how angry I feel when I hear people comparing a red front door or a wristband for free nosh to what those people went through.

❒❒❒

COUNCIL bigwigs in east London have come up with the bonzer idea to clean up their parks. Patrols are being employed to pick up the dog-doings, and take them away for analysis. A team of experts will prod about with the, ahem, ingredients of the poop and then check them against a dog-doings DNA database in an attempt to trace the owner. Now there's an interesting career for somebody.

One does wonder, though, whether Big Baz the skinhead will have taken his borderline legal cross-bred pit bull down to the vet's to be registered. Still, I'm sure the little old lady who can't bend down to pick it up will be fined.

All this at a time of supposed austerity. But there's still money for a dog poo database. And which area of London is carrying out this exciting experiment? Barking. Says it all really.

5 COMANCHE CHIEFTAIN (CAN) (20) 035560
B g Broken Vow (USA) - Platinum Preferred (CAN)
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Steve Di Iorio
TIMEFORM VIEW Tenth of 11 in handicap at Nottingham (10.2f, goo
Cheekpieces on 1st time.

6 YULONG XIONGBA (IRE) (15) 20-6006
B g Kodiac - Moon Legend (USA)
Owners Group 006
Rockfield Farm
TIMEFORM VIEW Sixth of 11 in handicap at Pontefract (8f, good to soft, 4
season, and new yard may well get more out of him from reduced mark.

7 INVINCIBLE WISH (IRE) (35) 505602 C
B g Vale of York (IRE) - Moonlight Wish (IRE)
Michael & Lesley Wilkes
Cyril Ryan
TIMEFORM VIEW Course winner 33/1, second of 9 in handicap at Chepsto
Hood on 1st time. Needs to prove he can build on that now.

Yulong Xiongba makes the racecard at Wolverhampton

A close up of the four-year-old

Mark Shipp with previous trainer Roger Charlton

A racing certainty

You don't need to be rich and famous to take ownership of a racehorse. **MARK SHIPP**, who is living the dream, explains

TRADITIONALLY a pastime for the elite, horse racing is not called 'the sport of kings' for nothing.

That said, there is an affordable way to rub shoulders with the rich oil barons and businessmen. Welcome to the world of the Owners Group.

The group gives everyday folks, like myself, the chance to experience the world of the turf and to have a stake in a thoroughbred. Quite like mega-rich Manchester City playing a non-league team full of window-fitters, mechanics and postmen in the FA Cup, the Owners Group is made up of people from all walks of life, my Asda shop assistant other half among them.

True, our horse Yulong Xiongba (pronounced you-long shawn(g) ba) hasn't quite hit the heights on the track. But the excitement of just telling people 'that's our horse' is something money cannot buy. But put the Champagne on ice. . . he's finished third – both times at Wolverhampton – and then followed that up with a second.

Dictated

As a year's membership is less than it costs to keep a car on the road, what is there to lose? Even if our share probably only equates to a toenail on its hind leg – not that he's divvied up that way.

The cost actually depends on the training fees dictated by the yard at which the horse is based. Yulong had been stabled by Derby-winning trainer Roger Charlton near Chippenham in Wiltshire, but has since switched to the Malton, north Yorkshire yard of Julie Camacho. A smaller string means the training costs aren't as high, so a second year of membership is only half the price of what it was the first time round. Bargain.

So what can you expect for your money? Not to get rich, unfortunately, though that doesn't stop us dreaming. "This time next year. . ." as that great philosopher Del Boy Trotter once said..

Yulong Xiongba, carrying the Owners Group silks, in action on the track

A regular newsletter informs all syndicate holders what the Owners Group horses are up to and there are text and email updates of when a horse is running or declared to do so. That in turn gives owners the chance to claim a free badge to see their horse race.

There's even merchandise in the form of souvenir pictures and mugs (that's the drinking vessel, not us gullible punters), while stable visits are also offered.

My friend Andy, a fellow Yulong owner, and I took up the offer to see the horse 'at home'. He was well-behaved that day, but unfortunately that has not always translated itself to the course. A seven furlong winner in Ireland as a two-year old when trained by former Derby-winning jockey Johnny Murtagh, we had high hopes Yulong would progress. But more of that later.

My involvement began when my other half spotted a newspaper advert for the Owners Group, looking for shareholders for Champagne Express, a jumper trained by Nicky Henderson – an ideal Christmas present she thought, knowing of my love for the sport.

"But I want us to experience it together," I said. And so our journey began. Shares in Champagne Express were gone when we applied. So Yulong it was. Meanwhile, our first choice won his first race, bolting up at Chepstow to earn nearly £2,000 in prize money.

Another Owners Group horse, Sound Investment, has lived up to its name, finishing first past the post on three occasions, racking up around £80,000 in win and place earnings in the process, adding to that with a third place finish in the prestigious Paddy Power Gold Cup at Cheltenham. And Yulong? His name means clever person, but he hasn't been too intelligent on the course. His two third-place finishes and one second are his best efforts from his six outings this year. But, like a football team showing steady year-on-year improvement, we know a win is just around the corner.

Spare a thought, though, for the owners of Spirit of Wedza who, after 13 races, have yet to see their horse get its head in front.

Yulong got off to an inauspicious start when he refused to go in the stalls and unseated his rider on his seasonal bow at Lingfield.

Subsequent races saw him down the field at Windsor and Kempton. He was even scratched on the morning of a race because he had a 'dirty nose'– or 'having a bit of a cold'.

Experience

But this ownership lark is nothing to be sniffed at. Yulong has thrived following a change of surroundings. He was only just touched off when third at Dunstall Park – which meant the three of us, myself, my other half and mate, could all witness it. And we were also there when it followed up with another third placed finish, enjoying the ultimate owners' experience.

The feeling was indescribable, collecting an owners' badge, meeting other shareholders and the trainer's husband, cheering Yulong on then watching him parade around the unsaddling enclosure. The joy was unbridled, you could say.

Listening to the trainer's husband Steve Brown is an absolute pleasure. So knowledgeable about his field, he talks the owners through Yulong's races, gives the lowdown on future plans and informs us all how the horse is doing at home. All are convinced the right race will come along and a win is just around the corner. But should that not happen, it's been fun watching him try.

We haven't quite got another Frankel on our hands but as my mate put it, 'we are living the Yulong dream'.

● **Owners Group still has shares in a number of horses. Visit www.ownersgroup.co.uk or call 01380 811888 for more details. Pictures courtesy of the Owners Group.**

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Dog owners bite back over Himley ban

IT is obvious that if A Blake needs someone to explain to him why there has been so much coverage on the 'dog ban' then his letter (Letters to the Editor, January 21) is of no value other than to be controversial or a need to see his name in the paper.

If I may I will enlighten him.

The main reason is that a vast number of people who use Himley Hall are dog owners who use the grounds on a regular basis, most of whom are retired or infirm and find the area proposed as 'dog free' the easiest option.

I might add that we use Himley seven days per week, 52 weeks of the year, thus contributing a huge amount of revenue through our yearly parking fees or daily parking fees, as opposed to picnickers who use the park once or twice a year when the sun shines.

There already exists a picnic area adjacent to the golf cafe that is ideal for them, offering hot or cold drinks and snacks.

Children also like to be around the pool feeding the ducks and geese, which brings in to question the real reason for the proposed 'picnic area'.

The dog owners would, with respect, like to know how they intend to marshal the proposed area?

Will caravans still be allowed to park there along with the dogs they own?

Will the area still be used as a overflow car park in the case of certain events being held at the park, thus preventing picnickers from accessing the area?

D WHITE
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Appalled by faulty car lights

IN addition to drivers who do not switch their lights on early at dusk and in inclement weather, I am appalled by the large number of vehicles with deficient lights.

Drivers need to check their lights regularly and rectify defective ones.

The only other check which occurs is the MOT test which takes place only annually and, in the case of new vehicles, only after the first three years.

In the meantime, the police should be more active by setting up roadside spot checks not with a view to prosecuting but, instead, requiring defects to be rectified within a short specified period. This would seem to be more sensible than holding speed checks and prosecuting drivers who exceed the speed limit by a relatively small margin.

Priority given to this issue is necessary because of long hours of darkness and bad visibility at this time of year.

D PARISH
Rowley Regis

True FA Cup spirit is in lower leagues

THE Premiership now seem to be a law unto themselves in British football. Playing a fixture list in the week following an FA Cup round has given managers just the excuse they need to field weakened teams in what has been known as one of the world's most famous knockout cup competitions.

In contrast non-league clubs treat the FA Cup with the respect it deserves. Starting way back in August, they attempt to battle through the early rounds and generate a bit of cup glory and the prize money that goes with it.

Just take a look at the achievement of Stourbridge FC this season when they reached the second round, and created unprecedented levels of interest in the area with sell out games against Kidderminster and Eastleigh. That's why it is so sad that some Premiership managers don't want to be bothered.

Hard pressed Division One and Two clubs can benefit financially from a good cup run.

The third round produced some exciting games, let's hope the next round does the same, with supporters filling the grounds to show just how important the FA Cup is to English and Welsh football — it's part of our heritage.

A P CUFF
Stourbridge

Migrants history is repeating

HISTORY constantly repeats itself as we simply find new ways to make old mistakes.

Many people insist that mass immigration is good for the economy, as though this excuses the inevitable damage to the environment, national infrastructure and the host population.

Therefore, it is all the more astonishing to hear of the events in Cologne on New Year's Eve. Hundreds of women sexually assaulted by a gang of about a thousand men of 'North African or Arabic appearance' while the police did nothing. Human rights groups bellowed that asylum seekers must not be blamed.

The main beneficiaries of mass immigration are unscrupulous employers who exploit migrants as cheap labour. Do we want to pander to their greed and the flawed agenda of an increasingly overbearing 'Politically Correct' (PC) brigade?

B MONTROSE
Sedgley

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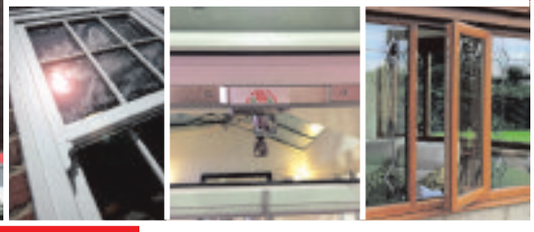

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Funds sent to Cumbrian flood appeal

Kingswinford TG

IN December, there was no formal monthly meeting. Instead, the members met for a sumptuous festive lunch at the Lodge in Dudley.

Food featured prominently in early January, when Luncheon Club members met for lunch and to catch up on the news.

On January 11 the regular activities resumed and members were welcomed by chairman Enid Fennell, who wished everyone a Happy New Year. This was followed by an entertaining evening of song and readings performed by Liz and Brian Dickenson.

This was greatly enjoyed and they were thanked by Kath Turner.

However, before this jollity, there was business to be dealt with. Following the reading and signing of the minutes, it was announced that collection instead of Christmas cards had raised £60. It was unanimously decided to add the TG's small charity account to this and send it to a Cumbrian flood relief charity.

The flowers to enhance the room were provided by Josie Smith who donated them as extra raffle prizes. The raffle prizes were then won by Sally Fowler, Wendy Iley and Chris Moy.

Members were asked to consider joining the committee as there are currently members who have other commitments which are causing difficulties.

The speaker at February's meeting will be Mary Bodfish who will explain why 'You can't Abdicate and Eat It.

Cheers to history of Black Country beers

Ambeclote History Society

KEITH Hodgkin's presentation on 'Beer and Breweries in the Black Country' started by him putting some context into his talk. It was not, he said, a definitive history of local pubs and breweries but more a personal reflection as a real ale fan on his experiences and memories of those establishments from the mid-1970s to present day.

The roots of his liking for beer and enthusiasm for the places where the amber nectar could be obtained, stemmed from a 1972 calendar which pictorially featured Black Country pubs. He then decided to visit all of the pubs on the calendar.

There were nine breweries in the Black Country at that time, the independent family-run ones such as Ma Pardoe's (Netherton), Simpkiss (Brierley Hill), Holden's (Woodsetton), Batham's (Brierley Hill) and the larger scale corporate ones like Bank's (Wolverhampton), Hanson's (Dudley), Mitchells & Butlers (Cape Hill), Springfield (Wolverhampton) and Highgate.

The talk proceeded with Keith reviewing each brewery in turn, giving some of the history behind each of them and the beers they produced with personal anecdotes along the way.

He then related a most amusing personal story of his first attempt at 'the Batham's Nine' which in the 1980s involved visiting each pub for a pint during the course of the day.

Approaching the end of the talk, Keith came forward in time to the 1990s when new breweries were starting to open. He mentioned a number of them who are located very close to or operate in Stourbridge and are enjoying great early success.

In summarising Keith was pleased to hear of 13 new breweries starting up since he was a young man despite experiencing many tragic losses. There are now more active breweries (17) in the Black Country than there were in the early 70s, offering a lot more choice and generally some fantastic beers, brewed by people who are proud of their Black Country location and heritage.

Keith was thanked for his informative talk and the evening concluded with generous applause and the drawing of the raffle which most appropriately included a range of bottled ales.

The next meeting is on Wednesday February 10 at 7.30pm in The Lehr Theatre at the Ruskin Centre. Max Keen will talk on The Anglo-Zulu War, providing a real insight into the battles and the involvement and bravery of local soldiers.

Batham's Brewery in Brierley Hill in 1920

The main Holden's Brewery on the right

New members welcome to join circle of friends

Dudley Widows & Friends Circle

DUDLEY Widows & Friends Circle will hold their next meeting at its usual date and time, 2.15pm on the third Saturday of the month at the United Reformed Church Hall, Trinity Road, Dudley.

The February meeting will be on the 13th.Various activities are planned for the year ahead and new members are welcomed.

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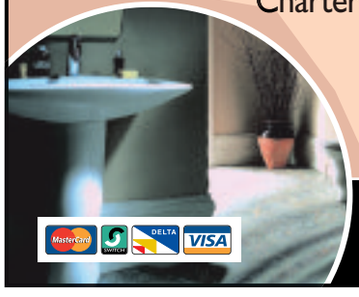

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Family triumph in their battle over the badgers

Trying to keep badgers out — Lucy Davis, of Norton, with Councillor Colin Elcock, who has backed their campaign

THEY have wrecked shrubs and plants, dug holes in the lawn and left children unable to play in their own garden.

But after an 18-month-long campaign, a Stourbridge couple say they are relieved to be finally free of a destructive family of badgers.

Lucy and Mark Davis, of Norton, with their three young boys, had grown increasingly concerned with the badger invasion.

The badgers made themselves at home creating a network of setts under the garden. However, the Davis family were left at their wits' end with strict legislation in place curbing attempts to remove the pests.

They filmed the animals on CCTV until they were successful in securing a licence allowing experts to move the badger family. Despite the work costing thousands of pounds, they say it has been worth it.

"They have blighted our lives for a while but we are so relieved that we are now badger free," said Mrs Davis, of South Road. "It has felt like a war at times, but the irony is we quite like the animals, me and Mark are both members of the Wildlife Trust."

Nocturnal visitors — two of the badgers

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Man jailed for raping girl, 13

A MAN who repeatedly raped an underage girl has been jailed for 19 years.

Darius Majchrzak, who has links to Dudley and West Bromwich, was also convicted of making indecent images of a child.

The 43-year-old was found guilty of 12 counts of rape and three counts of making indecent images of a child at Birmingham Crown Court. Eight of the rape charges related to a child under the age of 13.

The offences, which took place between 2006 and 2012, came to light as police were investigating an unrelated matter.

West Midlands Police were able to convict him of four of the attacks outside of the UK.

Majchrzak, of no fixed address, denied all of the offences against the victim but was convicted after a trial.

Detective Inspector Sarah Booth, from the child abuse investigation team, said: "These were really serious offences and at no point did he take any responsibility for his crimes."

Homes planned for site of demolished swimming baths

HOMES will be built on the former site of Coseley Baths, which was controversially demolished six years ago.

Plans for a development comprising of 24 homes have been lodged for the Pear Tree Lane site.

Dudley Council's decision to close the swimming baths in August 2009 after more than 40 years led to an acrimonious row.

There was widespread opposition in the area and despite a high-profile campaign to save the facility, and even the threat of legal action, the baths were eventually bulldozed the following March.

Coseley councillor Melvyn Mottram said he was pleased something could finally be done with the 1.5-acre site, which is owned by Dudley Council.

He said: "It's good that the site is going to be used. I would much prefer there was a baths on there but that's not going to happen.

"It's the only good thing that can be put on there, we need more homes in the area.

"There is no chance of another baths being there, the funding is not there."

Much of the site has been fenced off since the baths were demolished.

Its car park remains, but has degraded since being abandoned.

Affordable

Under the plans, which are now set to go before Dudley Council in the coming months, the development would be spilt into eight two-bedroom, 10 three-bedroom and six four-bedroom homes.

The two-bedroom homes would be affordable.

Access to the new homes would be gained via Old Meeting Road and Pear Tree Lane.

The closure of Coseley Baths left a sour taste with campaigners and Pat Jordan, aged 74, believes the site should be used for another leisure facility.

She said: "They took a facility off us that was very well used. It was disgusting what they did to Coseley Baths. I don't want houses, I want swimming baths."

The site was shut after the council said it needed £1 million of urgent repairs to make the roof safe and a further £1m to bring the rest of the building up to scratch.

Driver trapped after car rolls

THREE people were injured — and one of them was trapped for half an hour — after a two-car crash near Himley Cricket Club. A collision at just after 6pm on Friday saw one of the cars roll over.

A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman said: "The driver of the car that rolled over, a man believed to be in his 40s, had suffered multiple lacerations in the crash and also a reduced level of consciousness. The man received emergency treatment at the scene from medics and with the assistance of the fire service was removed from the vehicle. He was trapped for around 30 minutes. The man was transferred by ambulance to Russells Hall Hospital for further treatment."

A woman passenger had cuts to her hands and the man driving the other vehicle received treatment for chest and wrist injuries.

Painting captures comedy characters

The Fizzogs, Deb Nicholls, Jacky Fellows and Sue Hawkins, with the painting of them in their granny guise

BLACK Country comedy trio The Fizzogs said thank you to their backers at a special event in The Old Glasshouse pub in Dudley.

Mayor of Dudley Councillor Steve Waltho joined representatives from Holden's Brewery, C & D Consultancy and Black Country Kitchens at the event hosted by Fizzogs Sue Hawkins, Jacky Fellows and Deb Nicholls.

Deb said: "It was a fantastic chance to network as well as say thank you to everyone who has helped us the past year."

Last year the comediennes, who gained fame with their dancing grannies sketch, won rave reviews at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and sold out a show at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre. Their pantomime, Freezin', a Black Country spoof of Disney's Frozen, is currently on tour.

The trio have also been immortalised in art by chairman of the Dudley Society of Artists, Keith Turley. Deb added: "To save us from just sticking it in the office, we have decided to put it in different locations around the Black Country – at the minute it is in the mayor's parlour."

University involved in start-up schemes

WOULD-BE entrepreneurs are being offered fixed-rate loans in a scheme launched by the University of Wolverhampton. The university has teamed up with Virgin StartUp to deliver the Government-funded scheme.

It is aimed at helping Black Country people put their business ideas into practice, encouraging entrepreneurship and promoting economic growth.

Budding businesspeople receive a unique offering of mentoring, finance, practical advice and support.

Tony Collins, non-executive director at Virgin StartUp, said: "We're delighted to be working with the University of Wolverhampton to help local entrepreneurs get their business ideas off the ground, not only financially but by providing an invaluable network of advice and support."

For information about Virgin StartUp loans, email Rose Judeh-Elwell at r.judehelwell@wlv.ac.uk or go to www.wlv.ac.uk/virginstartup

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Landmark flats a sell-out success

A NEW flats development in a former office block in Brierley Hill sold out in just five months.

The Landmark has been created by the redevelopment of the 140,000 sq ft site at The Waterfront. It was due for completion in December and is creating 181 homes, a mixture of one and two-bedroomed flats and penthouse apartments.

The Landmark is the former Point North building, originally the headquarters of banking operation Egg, and had been empty for six years.

Wolves legend Steve Bull is among those who have snapped up an apartment, which were on sale for between £89,950 and £149,950. Developer, Birmingham-based property investment group Seven Capital, described the demand as 'phenomenal'.

Hundreds are victims of dog attacks across Black Country

DOG and animal attacks have seen 336 people suffer bite wounds in the past two years in the Black Country, including at least 21 youngsters under three years old.

And 161 of those people bitten were taken to hospital, figures released by the West Midlands Ambulance Service reveal.

The figures come after it was revealed dog attacks have soared 76 per cent in the UK over the past decade, according to Health and Social Care Information Centre statistics.

Sandwell and West Birmingham was the worst hit area, with 108 attacks registered. Of those, one victim was a baby, six were infants, 11 were children and 61 were adults.

In Dudley, 85 people were attacked, including five infants, 11 children and 61 adults.

There have been 73 Walsall victims, including one infant, 17 children and 46 adults, while in Wolverhampton, 70 people were bitten, including two babies, six infants as well as seven children and 46 adults. Ages were not given for 46 of those bitten in the Black Country.

Victims included a two-year-old and her sister, who were bitten by an Akita/Husky crossbreed, in Netherton in July last year. A firefighter on duty was bitten when helping put out a garden fire at a house in Tividale last August. He was bitten by a Japanese Akita.

An ambulance spokesman said: "If someone suffers an animal bite we would encourage them to wash out the wound with cold running water. The affected area should then have a clean dressing applied.

"If you feel the wound needs medical attention then please either call NHS 111 for advice or visit your local walk in centre."

Fresh appeal for witnesses

POLICE have made a fresh appeal for witnesses to a road accident in Tipton which left a 16-year-old boy in a critical condition.

The teenager was hit by a silver Toyota Aygo at the traffic-light-controlled junction of Bilston Road and Farmer Way, Gospel Oak.

He suffered serious head injuries and remained in a serious condition in hospital as The Chronicle went to Press.

Officers have spoken to the driver of the Aygo, who stopped at the scene of the incident at around 5.30pm on Thursday. A number of witnesses have already come forward.

Anyone with information should call police on 101.

Defiant message on school

Coseley School pupils make their views known outside Dudley Council House last week

LOUD, proud and passionate about saving their school from closure.

Pupils stood united, braving cold temperatures, to send a vocal message to Dudley Council leaders.

Councillors were left under no illusions as they debated the future of The Coseley School, as to what pupils demanded.

Students from the closure-threatened school waved placards and chanted support alongside parents on the steps of Dudley Council House last week

Councillors have launched a consultation into the school after claiming there had been a 'dramatic decline' in the number of pupils. But pupils and their parents voiced their disappointment over a decision to discuss the school's future in private when members of the public and the Press were banned from hearing discussions on its future during the cabinet meeting. People now have until April to submit their views as part of the consultation.

Around 1,500 people have already signed a petition urging councillors to drop any future closure plans.

Councillors say they will take views into consideration before making a final decision over whether to shut the school down.

Dudley councillor Ian Cooper, who is in charge of the local authority's schools, said that the pupils' best interests are at the heart of their talks.

But Dudley's UKIP group leader, Councillor Paul Brothwood, said: "The consultation is a charade and I am appalled that the decision was made behind closed doors despite calls to open it to the public.

"UKIP Dudley Group will fight the recommended closure of The Coseley School."

Theatre group's £28k for Asian folk project

A THEATRE and dance company that works with people across the Black Country has been awarded £28,000 of lottery funding for its latest project.

Black Country Touring works with people from Dudley, Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Walsall to put on shows in schools, community centres, libraries and art galleries.

The company has been awarded £28,000 for their Tongue Tied & Twisted project, which transforms the traditional folk stories of Asian elders into theatre.

Vanessa Harbar, head of the Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, said: "This exciting inter-generational project will make a significant contribution to the local community by preserving and sharing cultural traditions. This investment will give local people the opportunity to engage with creative story-telling projects, whilst also recognising and valuing the unique contribution of oral history in local cultural heritage."

Pub lights help charity

A PUB near Sedgley raised just under £1,000 for a children's charity from its spectacular annual Christmas lights display.

The Summer House in Gospel End collected for The Heart Link charity.

The pub's licensees Karen Kennedy and Phillip Kennedy are passionate about the charity, saying if it wasn't for them their daughter would have lost her life. The Heart Link charity's life support machines helped their daughter recover after illness.

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There is also the Spanish resort of Roses, Mayrhofen in Austria, the Swiss Chocolate Train, German Rhine Valley Cruise and the Italian resorts of Diano Marina and Riva del Garda.

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Strictly speaking this was best yet

REVIEW

By Sue Attwater

IT'S easy to sum up the Strictly Come Dancing tour. Just one word, three syllables – A-MAZ-ING!

The show recently was named as the best entertainment programme in the National TV awards and the follow-up tour certainly gets my vote as the best to date.

The dancing, settings and effects were all superb – just one quibble. Why when the 'Magnificent Seven' are strutting their stuff do they have to have professional dancers on the stage performing with them. Good as the pros are it is the celebrities we are there to watch.

Close

The marks from the judges were close throughout but it was the current champion The Wanted's Jay McGuiness dancing with Aliona Vilani – who recently announced she was leaving the TV show – who again picked up the glitter ball on the first night of the tour at Birmingham's packed Barclaycard Arena.

He and Countryfiles's Anita Rani and professional partner Gleb Savchenko were neck and neck at the end but Jay clinched it. His jive dance from the Movie Week was sensational and had the audience cheering and stamping their feet.

Gleb did get his shirt off a few times to win fans over. Certainly judges Craig Revel Horwood and Bruno Tonioli were impressed.They were joined, of course, by head judge Len Goodman who admitted that he really missed going on the tour last year. Compere was Mel Giedroyc who joked with the celebrities after each dance leading to one interesting revelation. Jay, when asked where he kept the glitter ball, said it had pride of place - in his twin brother's toilet. Mel also persuaded Len to give her a quick tango lesson while the votes were being counted. Hilarious!

The phone votes by the audience come after the second dances and 10p of each call goes to Sport Relief.

Referring to the tour as the Great British Dance Off – instead of her usual Bake-Off role – she had appeared at the start of the show from a giant cake, she was obviously loving her role. Although I am not sure why she had to keep referring to her prompt cards so often.

The rest of the line-up included this year's TV finalist actress Georgia May Foote dancing with new recruit Giovanni Pernice. Known as team GG they made the perfect couple – on and off stage from what it is reported.

Call the Midwife Star Helen George dancing with Aljaz Skorjanec scored highly with their lovely Viennese Waltz and Ainsley Harriott, dancing with Karen Clifton instead of his regular partner Natalie Lowe, who had to pull out through to illness, may not have had perfect technique but certainly kept the judges and audience amused.

Previous strong contenders from earlier TV shows were The Saturdays' singer Frankie Bridge who could not go on the tour last year as she was pregnant. She danced with Kevin Clifton who was obviously impressed with how much she had remembered.

Shake

Last, but not least, was EastEnders' Jake Wood. He danced with Janette Manrara and he certainly could still 'shake his booty'.

The judges, referred to by Mel as the good, the bad and the ugly – needless to say who she meant, marked generously with 10 for many dances apart from Craig who held on to his 10 until the end giving it to Jay for his jive.

And I am sure the audience vote for the tour would also be a resounding 10!

Mel Giedroyc, on top of the cake, surrounded by the Strictly crew

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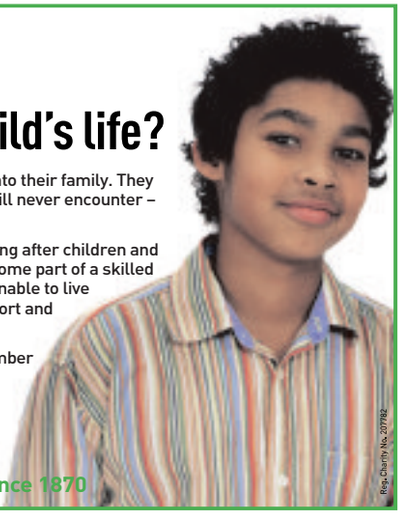

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Benji loves it when it's brass monkeys

IT may be cold out there but the sudden drop in temperature last week didn't stop this cheeky chap venturing outside to enjoy himself.

Dudley Zoo keepers are taking extra measures during the chilly weather to make sure their rare and exotic animals are kept warm, but that didn't stop Bornean orang utan Benji playing with the white stuff.

Ungulates Section Leader, Jay Haywood, said: "A lot of the indoor dens are heated and insulated, so we make sure they're all kept at a constant temperature of around 22 degrees during the winter months.

Snow

"When it drops cold and we have snow flurries, then we do keep some of the animals inside.

"Species like the tortoise, parma wallabies and our giraffes have remained indoors over the last few days and we're constantly monitoring the heating across the site in case we need to adjust it."

Food and drink is made with hot water and eyes are firmly on the temperature gauges in many of the animal houses, with additional heat lamps brought in if the temperature takes a sudden drop. Elsewhere across the 40-acre zoo site, great apes, tigers, tapirs, birds, primates and meerkats all enjoy their heated dens and heat lamps and are protected against the cold and the snow.

Upper Primates Section Leader, Pat Stevens, said: "The weather dictates if we keep some of the primates in or not, especially with snow fall and temperature.

"We have to be careful with our lemurs as they could get frostbite, so we do keep them indoors if it's very cold or snowy, likewise the apes and other small primates."

But it doesn't matter how hard the keepers try at keeping the animals warm – some still want to go and play out in the cold.

Pat added: "We've been giving the orang utans squash made up with hot water to warm them up, but they've been going outside and making up snowballs and taking it back inside to eat, which sort of defeats our object!"

The Castle Hill attraction is open from 10am until 3pm during the winter months.

Visitors to Dudley Zoo in January and February receive a free return trip. The return ticket will be valid for six months from visit date and an original receipt from the January or February visit will be needed.

Benji the Bornean orang utan takes a moment to enjoy some cold British weather at Dudley Zoo

Council criticised for looking to pull out of scheme for poor

A SCHEME which helps hundreds of families struggling to make ends meet in Dudley every year will be scrapped under new council cost-cutting plans.

Dudley Council aims to get rid all of the funding for the Local Welfare Assistance scheme by 2018. Hundreds of families currently receive food and fuel vouchers, as well as furniture and white goods, under the scheme.

The council wants to slash £100,000 off the budget for the upcoming year before withdrawing all of the funding in 2017/18 but is in talks with outside bodies to take over the running of the scheme.

UKIP leader Councillor Paul Brothwood criticised the council for aiming its cuts at 'the poorest members of society'.

Vulnerable

He said: "Yet again the Labour-controlling group is focusing on the most vulnerable people in society. It's absolutely ludicrous. I appreciate the council needs to cut budgets drastically but to rectify its mistakes it shouldn't focus on the poorest members of society. Let's start the cuts at the top, not the bottom."

A report created for councillors says the current scheme could be taken over by outside bodies, saving the cash-strapped council money.

The report states: "The current scheme assists residents in Dudley who are without sufficient resources to meet an urgent need that poses an immediate and substantial risk to their health and safety or that of their dependents."

Is this woof justice as dog-free zones start

PERMANENT signs will be placed around Himley Hall when dogs are banned from using certain parts of the attraction.

It comes despite angry dog owners signing a petition against the move to ban pets from sections of the site and protests against the proposed 'dog free zones'.

Council bosses want to cater more for picnicking families by stopping pets using a third of 18th century hall's gardens.

The ban, which comes into effect on February 1, will prevent dogs from using open spaces stretching between the Main Gate and West Gate.

Some of the temporary signs put up by the council, warning of the changes, had been removed in recent weeks, but not by council staff.

Permanent

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "We're currently organising for permanent signs to be placed within the park to identify the dog free zone but until then temporary signs are in place."

But parent Simon White, from Sedgley, said he wanted his two children, aged six and eight, to spend time in the countryside where they could run and play safely away from dog faeces.

"Everywhere we go there is dog faeces and owners who insist their dog is not a problem and is okay to be off its lead and will not bite," he said.

By James Driver-Fisher

"They have gradually taken over every bit of parkland and our canal walking paths – and heaven help anyone who challenges that.

"We'd like to thank Dudley Council for taking this action, which although will not be enforced at least is one small step in the right direction."

Mr White, aged 52, said he did not see any difference between yobs and 'so called respectable people' with dogs who never cleaned up after their pets.

He said: "I use Himley at least once every 10 days but try to go off-peak when I can, as a result of these issues.

"A week never passes when we don't hear reports on some issue with dogs attacking someone."

Himley Hall was jointly bought by Dudley and Wolverhampton District Councils in 1966, and its park was opened as a public leisure area. Dudley bought Wolverhampton's share in 1988 gaining outright ownership.

Inquest is opened

AN inquest has opened on a man with depression who was found hanged in his house. Philip White, 59, was discovered in Habberley Road, Rowley Regis, by his wife on December 28. Black Country Coroner Zafar Siddique, said the hearing at Smethwick Coroners Court on February 17 would include statements about the care Mr White received from health professionals.

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Support group needs helpers

A CHARITY in the Black Country has made a plea for more volunteers to join its community support programme.

The Kaleidoscope Group runs a project in Sandwell, involving support services manager Mary Hannibal, which aims to support elderly and vulnerable people.

The scheme helps people access services and aims to help them maintain their independence in their own homes. Volunteer facilitator Michael Sutton said there was a desperate need for more volunteers. He added: "With the ageing population in Sandwell and the demand so high for our service, we are in real need for volunteers."

The charity has been running for more than 40 years. Contact 0121 565 5605 or www.kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk/community-offer

Schools praised for the way bomb threat was handled

STUDENTS in the Black Country have been praised for their response in the aftermath of a series of hoax bomb calls which caused schools to be evacuated.

Four schools were evacuated last Tuesday morning (January 19). Calls were made to Oldbury Academy and Bristnall Hall Academy, in Oldbury, Holly Lodge in Smethwick and Leasowes High School, Halesowen, warning of an immediate threat.

Police say that they did not advise schools to close but safety was a 'priority'. Headteachers said evacuating was the right thing to do even though lessons were interrupted.

Pupils told to leave as quickly as possible. The schools were searched but no suspicious packages were found.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "Following the alerts made directly to the schools, some institutions took the independent decision to evacuate students. At no time did police advise the schools affected or others to close or to change their usual timetable."

On Oldbury Academy's website, headteacher Philip Shackleton said: "The response of our staff and students was excellent. They left our site quickly, calmly and were unflustered despite the considerable disruption to their day. The police also commented how impressed they were."

Leasowes High School reopened in the afternoon after it was confirmed pupils were not in danger. Headteacher Neil Shaw said: "We received a threat of a bomb and obviously evacuating the school is the right thing to do in the interests of the safety. As soon as we had the all clear from police we returned to lessons as normal, but at no stage did our school close."

It's a key role for canal locks

THE charity that looks after the waterways of the West Midlands is searching for new volunteer lock keepers.

The Canal & River Trust is on the lookout for people interested in volunteering at the locks across the region who will help passing boaters, welcome visitors and help maintain the canal.

Full training is provided and people of all ages and experiences can apply.

Volunteer lock keepers work on a shift basis throughout the year, typically a minimum of one day per fortnight, with busier periods between April and October.

Visit www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/volunteer to find out more or call 0303 0404040. There is also a programme of corporate volunteering

Jedi-fish are new attraction

The National Sea Life Centre Birmingham has welcomed Sarlacc jellyfish to its growing family

THE Force has grown stronger at the National Sea Life Centre in Birmingham after it adopted seven Sarlacc jellyfish.

Fans of the Star Wars franchise may already be familiar with the Sarlacc because it was the name given for the alien beast that appears in Star Wars: Episode VI – Return of the Jedi.

It was noted the species mirrored the actions of the sci-fi creature and was one of the reasons the jellyfish, officially called black sea nettles, are now also known as Sarlaccs.

The seven jellyfish, which mark the seven films in the Star Wars franchise, can have a bell diameter of up to three feet and tentacles reaching up to 18 feet.

James Robson, curator at The National Sea Life Centre Birmingham, said: "I'm so excited for visitors to get up close and personal with the Sarlacc jellyfish and to learn about the amazing traits of this fascinating species.

"I'm sure this rare stinging species will be a fantastic addition and I can't wait to learn more about them. Not too much is known about the behaviour of this species so it will be great to be able to see their characteristics first hand."

The Sarlacc is set apart from other jelly fish by its dark pigmentation and remain the largest invertebrates to have been discovered in the 20th century. The jellyfish have joined the attraction as part of the Breed, Rescue, Protect Programme, which operates in every Sea Life globally to protect oceans and the creatures from them.

The centre will launch its Ancient Oceans event about the prehistoric seas next month.

Gallery showcases contemporary art

A collection of contemporary art will be displayed at Wolverhampton Art Gallery this autumn.

The Artist Rooms collection is owned jointly by Tate and the National Galleries of Scotland and features more than 1,600 items, including artworks by Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Agnes Martin.

A Roy Lichtenstein exhibition at the Wolverhampton venue will be the first of 30 exhibitions across the UK over the next three years.

Artist Rooms began in 2008 when art dealer Anthony d'Offay made a gift of works by 32 international contemporary artists and has since grown through loans and gifts from artists, their representatives, and the Artist Rooms Foundation.

Since 2009, Artist Rooms artworks have been shown in 76 UK museums and galleries, in locations including Shetland and Penzance.

What's sup at beer fest

A FOUR-DAY beer festival is being held at a social club in Halesowen, starting today (Thursday).

The ale festival at Coombs Wood Sports and Social Club is the thirteenth annual event at the purpose-built club house in Stewarts Road.

It will feature a choice of 30 real ales to for drinkers to sup.

The beer will be served from 6pm today, from 4pm on the Friday, noon to midnight on Saturday and noon to 5pm on Sunday.

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The stands are packed for an FA Cup game at Bilston in November 1968

Bilston town, in the Dr Martens Midland Division from 2001

Author Jay Hearst with former Bilston FC player Nick Pugh

Bilston Town FC's grandstand from a few years back

The Bilston Town FC team in the 1958/59 season

Fan tells his beloved Bilston Town's story

A DIE-HARD fan of a semi-professional football team has told of his 'labour of love' after releasing a book chronicling the 121-year history of his club.

Supporter Jay Hearst has spent the last two years compiling information from every single season from 1894 for his book entitled The History of Bilston Town Football Club.

The 37-year-old has been 'burning the candle at both ends' to get the book ready for print, and now his hard work, with the help of club chairman Graham Hodson and vice-chairman Denise Frankham, has come to fruition.

It tells the tales of the all-conquering 1900-01 squad that won six trophies, as well as the side that almost a century later held a youthful Manchester United featuring top goalkeeper Mark Bosnich to a draw in a pre-season friendly, and a Steelmen star who lined up for England.

MEMORY LANE

By Nick Humphreys

Mr Hearst, a sales worker by day from the Bilston area, said: "It includes a small section for every single season, with gaps of course for World Wars One and Two. Some sections naturally are bigger than others, mostly based on the information I was able to find.

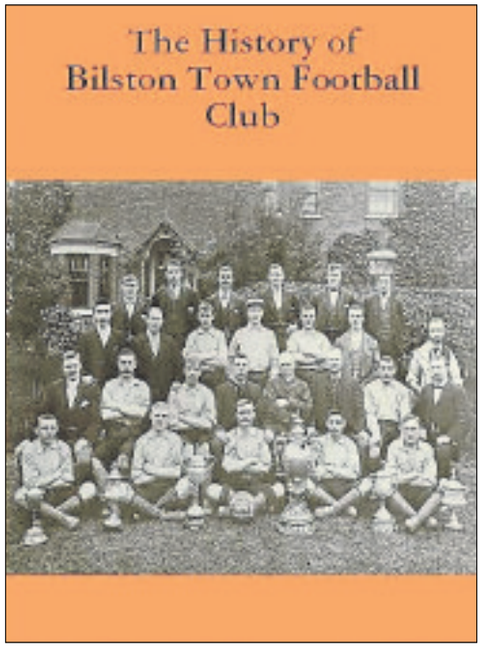
"It does include the entire league record from 1894-2015 and so is up to date right up until the start of this current football season. It also includes the club's entire post war FA Cup, FA Trophy and FA Vase records. Looking in some detail, using newspaper clippings that were supplied by the Express & Star, at the two occasions that Bilston Town have reached the FA Cup proper, in 1968/69 and 1972/73.

"It also includes information about league achievements, and cup achievements. There are also some former player biographies that were kindly given to me by the players at their reunions that I attended between May 2013 and October 2015."

The club, currently known as Bilston Town Community FC and which plies its trade in the West Midlands Regional Premier League, won the division in 1961 and 1973, its two most significant honours to date. During the 1961 triumph, striker Ron McDermott plundered a sensational 77 league goals. Mr Hearst added: "In April of 1896 a Bilston player called S. Bond was selected to play for an England amateur international against a Scotland amateur XI. That is one of the highlights. He was a Bilston player when selected to represent his country."

On his experience of writing the book, Mr Hearst said: "It was mostly a labour of love but having a full time job meant burning the candle at both ends for many, many months. But it was worth it."

To get your hands on a copy of the book visit www.bilstontownfc.weebly.com



The cover of Jay Hearst's book featuring the 1900-01 team

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I AM HERE TO REPRESENT THE PEOPLE, THEIR COMMUNITIES AND THEIR VOICE AND WILL HOLD ANY OFFICER, NO MATTER WHAT THEIR RANK, RESPONSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE FOR ANY COMPLAINTS WHICH ARE UPHELD. FORGET YOUR FORMAL WARNINGS FOR OFFICERS WATCHING EXPLICIT MATERIAL ON TAX PAYERS COMPUTERS WHILST BEING PAID FOR BY THE TAX PAYER, AND STAFF THAT ADJUST RECORDS TO SUIT THEIR OWN MISDEMEANOURS. THESE PEOPLE DESERVE NOTHING MORE THAN DISMISSAL AND I ASSURE YOU, IF I AM DULY ELECTED, THIS I WILL SEEK TO DO AND OBTAIN A POLICE FORCE YOU THE PUBLIC CAN THEN AGAIN PUT YOUR FAITH AND TRUST IN.
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Tony's cautionary tale on hi-tech fraudsters

IT all started with joining a personal wifi hotspot at a popular cafe. Then, within three months, Mr Smith had lost everything – including his home.

'Britain's greatest fraudster' Tony Sales last week gave a graphic demonstration to business leaders on just how easy it is to find yourself in the same position as a victim of Cyber Crime.

He left his audience in shock as he spoke at the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson's Annual Business Summit at Maple House, in Corporation Street, Birmingham.

Mr Sales went through step-by-step how a fraudster would go about targeting a victim, and the most frightening part was how easy it was to lose it all. He can literally steal your house from his mobile phone.

Britain's 'greatest fraudster' Tony Sales, with Commissioner David Jamieson

Legitimate

The demonstration started with Mr Smith, a made-up name, going for his regular coffee at Starbucks, and joining an open wifi network called 'Starbucks'. It would seem legitimate to all, but unbeknown to Mr Smith, the wifi network he joined was actually a personal hotspot set up by Mr Sales.

By joining the network, Mr Sales got access to Mr Smith's emails. From his emails Mr Sales got hold of Mr Smith's phone numbers from an online grocery shop receipt, and learnt Mr Smith was a keen shopper at a particular website.

The following day, Mr Sales placed a call to Mr Smith's work pretending to be from his favourite shopping website. Cutting a five-minute conversation short, Mr Smith handed over his debit card details to part with £33 to get some vouchers for later discounts. He was told that the £33 would show up on his bill as a Post Office transaction because this new scheme was being run in conjunction with them.

Mr Sales paused here, and asked the audience why £33 and the Post Office connection? Nobody knew, but it was blindingly obvious when he said, £33 is the amount it costs with the Post Office to divert mail from one address to another for three months.

Now, Mr Sales was receiving all of Mr Smith's personal post and possessed his debit card and bank details.

Mr Sales would then filter out what he needed and drop the rest of Mr Smith's post back to his home before he got up in the morning. He also created several IDs, including a passport and a BT bill for Mr Smith.

The aim at this point was clear for Mr Sales. "Other fraudsters may cash out here for £20,000 but I'm going to strip Mr Smith bare of everything," he announced to the room at Maple House. He learns that Mr Smith is a builder, earning £500 a week, and is someone who likes to save his money. He opens a bank account in his name slowly drips money from one account to another then changes the address the bank has on file for Mr Smith.

Mr Sales then buys a £40,000 Mercedes with £400 monthly repayments, sells the car to an offshore buyer for £20,000 and makes £17,500 profit after moving £2,500 into Mr Smith's account to cover the repayments for six months.

During the process of receiving Mr Smith's mail, Mr Sales discovers Mr Smith only has £50,000 left to pay on his mortgage for his £450,000 home. The bank offers 'Mr Smith' £300,000 to remortgage and, as Mr Sales announces with a grin, "within four hours Mr Smith has lost his home".

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Down-to-Earth views of an urbane spaceman

LEON BURAKOWSKI reports on a lecture by guitar-playing astronaut Colonel Chris Hadfield

CANADIAN astronaut Colonel Chris Hadfield gave space enthusiasts an insight into what it's like to leave the planet and live in orbit during a talk at Symphony Hall, Birmingham.

He also revealed at last week's event that rock icon David Bowie had told him of his delight that the guitar-playing spaceman had performed his classic song Space Oddity on the International Space Station (ISS) — an internet sensation that has now been watched 30 million times.

Now a great communicator for the space industry, Colonel Hadfield was inspired to aim towards the stars by watching the moon landings as a child.

At the time Canada didn't even have a space programme but that didn't stop him building a career in the military and aviation that sent him ever upwards towards that apparently impossible goal.

Commander

He went on to be Canada's first astronaut and spent 166 days in space. He flew on the Space Shuttle to Russian space station Mir and to the ISS. Then on the cramped Russian Soyuz capsule for his most famous and longest stint in space, nearly half a year aboard the ISS when he served as commander.

Under the banner The Sky Is Not The Limit, the former fighter pilot gave an inspiring talk about the qualities required to achieve goals, which can be summed up as: perseverance, preparation and competence.

Astronaut Chris Hadfield shared his out-of-this-world experiences

He also revealed fascinating facts about his literally out-of-this-world experiences and how they have changed his perspective on life, that he no longer looks at the world as 'them and us' but just 'us'.

Illustrated with video and photos, the 59-year-old gave an enthralling account of what it is like to take off sitting atop what is basically a giant bomb, then flung from gravity's grasp by the 80 million horsepower needed to send the space shuttle into orbit. He spoke with joy about the experience of weightlessness ('a toy that never winds down') and with awe of the time he briefly floated free in space during a spacewalk, when it was just him and the universe.

He also revealed that the astronaut's mantra is 'what is going to kill me next' during a regime of training, checking and rechecking systems and instruments.

He added with wry humour that sometimes Mission Control felt like a typical Help Desk, usually putting you on hold.

Once in space he did utter that famous phrase 'Houston we have a problem' after an ammonia leak threatened to shut down the station and a spacewalk was organised in a fraction of the usual time to repair the leak. He also old of how an apparently routine computer upgrade killed power on the ISS until the crew carried out a manual reboot. Astronauts have to be self-reliant.

During a question-and-answer session, Hadfield was asked if the crew of the ISS could relax and have a drink, to which he replied that in the dangerous environment of space every crew member is 'the designated driver'.

Aliens

He also revealed that reusable rockets could drive down the cost of space travel and lead to a new generation of satellites creating worldwide wi-fi, and his belief that mankind would return to the moon and create a lunar base.

On the inevitable 'aliens' question, he said the universe was so vast that the odds were most definitely in favour of life existing elsewhere, though close enough to interact with us was a different matter.

Returning to a theme about Birmingham as a city of invention, innovation and great engineering, he saw the sum of mankind's achievement leading to the ISS: "our testbed for exploring the universe."

And, of course, the 90-minute Evening with Chris Hadfield, ended with his tribute to Bowie, strumming and singing Space Oddity.... Planet Earth is blue, and he should know after orbiting it 16 times a day at 17,500mph.

Chris Hadfield shares his experiences and life lessons in the international best-selling book An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth.

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My Mary is a real diamond says husband Gordon, 82

A 'DIAMOND' – Gordon Hemmings' apt description of his wife Mary as they celebrate 60 years of marriage.

Mr Hemmings, aged 82, and his wife, 81, marked the occasion at their Swindon home on January 16. He said: "Mary is a diamond, she is brilliant.

"She is a fantastic gardener, cook and a mother. I love her today more than the day I met her."

Asked about the secret to a long and happy marriage, he said: "It is not always sunshine but you have to work together to make marriage last."

Mr Hemmings has been disabled since he was hit by a lorry in 1959.

He added: "My disability is showing now, I have to walk with sticks."

They first met at a garden centre in 1955 and married the following January with Mr Hemmings admitting it was 'love at first sight'.

Mrs Hemmings has always been a keen gardener.

They have one daughter, Sonia, 48, and a grandson.

Mr Hemmings served two years in national service, and has also worked for an insurance company, as a cashier at a Dudley bakery and as an administrator at a solicitors in Brierley Hill. Mrs Hemmings worked at a factory that made chains for Ford motor company.

Gordon and Mary Hemmings celebrating their diamond wedding anniversary at home in Swindon

200 students replace retiring paramedics

TWO hundred student paramedics will be recruited by West Midlands Ambulance Service.

The service wants to bring in the new staff to replace those who are retiring. Successful applicants will take a two-year course to get a university qualification. The service will pay the paramedics when they train and fund the majority of their university fees.

Chris Kowalik, West Midlands Ambulance service spokesman, said: "The view of our chief executive is that we have to deal with the shortage of paramedics by bringing recruits in and training them ourselves.

"It's a two-fold approach which means we will be replacing the already-qualified paramedics that are retiring and at the same time, upping the numbers of new student paramedics joining."

The recruitment drive follows one last May which saw recruits sought from Eastern Europe.

The jobless figures fall as 31.3m now in work

UNEMPLOYMENT in the West Midlands fell again in the three-month period to the end of November.

There were 8,000 fewer out of work, at 157,000, with the UK falling to a near eight-year low and a record number in work, official figures show. Nationally the jobless total fell by 99,000 in the three months to November to 1.6 million.

By John Corser

Recent job losses in the steel industry will not feed through to the figures for months.

The official data from the Office for National Statistics showed that unemployment has fallen by 239,000 over the past year nationally and 15,000 in the West Midlands.

The claimant count has also fallen – down by 4,300 last month to 785,900, the lowest since March 2008.

Employment has reached a record 31.3 million, a rate of 74 per cent, increasing by more than half a million over the past year and by 267,000 in the latest quarter.

Mixed

Claimant count numbers in the West Midlands were down 750 in December to 55,270.

In the Black Country there was a mixed picture. Dudley claimants were down 50 to 5,225 – 2.7 per cent of the working population – and Sandwell fell by the same number to 6,285 (3.2 per cent).

Walsall saw claimant numbers rise by 30 to 4,260 (2.5 per cent) and Wolverhampton had five more at 5,890 (3.7 per cent).

For Staffordshire the total fell by 45 to 4,470 (0.8 per cent) with Lichfield down 35 to 380 (0.6 per cent), Stafford falling 30 to 545 (0.7 per cent) and South Staffordshire staying the same at 685 (one per cent). Cannock Chase had five more claimants at 695 (1.1 per cent)

Gerry Lyng, JobCentre Plus spokesman for the Black Country, said that since 2010 the number of IT and business services jobs in the West Midlands had risen by 17 per cent or 88,000.

Retail had contributed 35,000 jobs – up six per cent; manufacturing 28,000 – up 10 per cent; leisure services 21,000 – up 17 per cent; health and education 14,000 – up two per cent; with construction 4,000 – up two per cent.

Increasing numbers of people setting up their own businesses were also helping cut unemployment with more than 7,500 new businesses started in the West Midlands since 2011 with 770 in Dudley.

Go-ahead for homes on old sports ground

HOMES will be built on the site of a once-famous sports ground in the Black Country after a developer was given the go-ahead by councillors, despite concerns from people living nearby.

Morris Homes has won its fight to put four three-storey houses on the former Accles and Pollock Sports Ground in Brades Road, Oldbury. Councillors approved the plans after a site visit teased fears over parking and road safety.

Two parking spaces will be provided with each house but neighbours insisted that was not enough and would lead to people parking on what is already a congested road. They also raised fears about homes being built on a bend and believe people's privacy may be infringed.

A 14ft fence would be put up next to the new houses and it is felt this will impact on views from current homes.

However, highways bosses did not raise any issues with the development.

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BJs charity has raised £1,875 for the Steve Bull Foundation via their annual charity walk and bike ride

Walks and rides boost BJ fund– by £14,000

Bijay Khela who died in 2009

A CHARITY set up in the memory of a lifelong Wolves fan has raised more than £14,000 for various causes through gruelling walks and bike rides – including £1,875 for the Steve Bull Foundation.

Bijay Khela lost his life to cancer, aged 41, in 2009. His father Gurmel died, aged 75, from the same illness in 2014.

Kami Aujla and Pete Khela , siblings to Bejay and children to Gurmel, set up BJ's Charity six years ago. Joined by more than 50 family and friends, they completed a 12-mile walk in the Cotswolds in May 2015.

In June, nine cyclists, including Pete, went on the charity's annual bike ride, a 60-mile trip on 'Boris Bikes' around London. Pete joined four other walkers in August on the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge.

Last year, the charity raised more than £14,000 for Cancer Research, the Steve Bull Foundation, Let Us Play in Wolverhampton, Unique Home for Girls in India, and the Nepal Earthquake. BJ's Charity has raised more than £159,000 for charity since 2010.

Gazing back at indie guitar rock

ALBUMS

by Leon Burakowski

WEDGED between the Madchester excess of Baggy and the birth of Brit Pop, the indie rock music scene of the late 1980s and early 90s hasn't been given its due.

Lumped together under the rather pejorative term 'shoegaze', this movement saw bands turning to the likes of The Velvet Underground, Echo & The Bunnymen, Siouxsie & The Banshees and scene-setters The Jesus & Mary Chain for inspiration. It remains a highly influential era for today's rock scene.

It could be argued that these bands, though few of them became famous names, did more to mould the current indie rock scene than the American grunge rockers who were higher profile at the time.

A handsome new various artists five-disc boxed set from Cherry Red Records, **Still In A Dream: A Story of Shoegaze (1988...1995)**, sets the record straight. It comes in the form of a hardback book with details on all the bands and essays on shoegaze from UK and American perspectives.

The term shoegaze covers a broad spectrum but at its most recognisable it combined swirling guitars with submerged vocals, as typified here by Swervedriver, Slowdive and Pale Saints. Many of the bands were on such labels as 4AD, Creation and Hut, and other leading lights included Ride, Lush, Curve, The House of Love, and Drugstore.

Some can be seen as psychedelic and drone rockers, including the whole space rock sub-genre created by Spacemen 3 and their spin-offs including Sonic Boom, Darkside, Spectrum and the still active Spiritualized.

Birmingham shoegazers Sweet Jesus hit the scene with Phonefreak Honey in 1992

Other bands included on this 77-track package that are still active (or re-activated) include The Boo Radleys, Flaming Lips and Mercury Rev.

Although the scene was largely Thames Valley based, there are some West Midlands bands featured. These include Birmingham outfits Drop (with Mirrored) and Sweet Jesus (with Phonefreak Honey), plus Coventry's Adorable (Sunshine Smile).

Shoegaze went on to influence bands across the planet, judging by the obscure groups also included from Japan, New Zealand, Sweden and across north America.

This set is not just an exercise in nostalgia, it can be recommended to indie rock fans of all ages.

The **James Taylor Quartet** are best known for stomping Hammond organ instrumentals, that have made them firm favourites on the Acid Jazz and Mod music scenes. On the **Rochester Mass** the quartet join forces with the 40-strong Rochester Cathedral Choir in an attempt to blend a Latin-sung choral mass with jazz/funk elements.

It sounds like a recipe for disaster but, although some church music purists may not agree, I think it works rather brilliantly. The sacred quality of the voices are enhanced by the thoughtful jazz-settings, especially the excellent work by flautist Gareth Lockrane.

Recorded in just one day, and dedicated by James Taylor to his late father Clive, the Rochester Mass reaches its sublime peak with Gloria.

Californian sunshine pop band **Harpers Bizarre** are best known for their version of Simon & Garfunkel's The 59th Street Bridge Song (Feelin' Groovy). **The Complete Singles Collection (1965-1970),** which is mostly mono, features that swinging 60s favourite along with their version of Come To The Sunshine, the Van Dykes Parks song which heralded the summer of love, and 24 other tracks.

If I've Been Dreaming, when they were The Tikis, reveals a strong Beatles influence, before they developed a softer, harmonious sound. But for every 60s pop gem there are at least a couple of old fashioned mom and pop standards or show tunes. More barber shop than Beach Boys.

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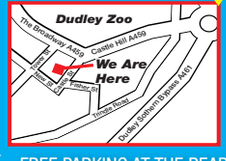

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IF you want to know more about your family history or the area in which you live, including the house you live in, then Dudley's Archives and Local History Centre is a great place to start your search.

The state-of-the-art centre offers free access to records dating back to the 12th century.

Staff and volunteers can help you access census records and parish registers which you can use to start building your family tree. Information can be added from other records that it holds such as trade directories, maps and photographs.

The centre's searchroom is always staffed so you are never left unsupported. There is a buddying service which is provided by volunteers who can advise on the workings of the searchroom and help you to find the information you are after.

The buddies also offer expert tuition and hints and tips on how to use the internet to help complete your genealogy (family history). This is particularly useful for those just starting out as a huge number of the basic building blocks required are now available on line.

There are classes to help complete beginners get started with the basics of family history research including: census records; birth, marriage and death certificates (Civil Registration); parish registers, military records and role of local archives.

Visit Dudley Archives and Local History Centre

Dudley archivist Richard Lewis said: "One of the most appealing and often addictive pastimes people undertake at the centre is compiling their family history. Dudley's Archives contains a wealth of fascinating and often unique material which allows people to find out more about themselves, their family and their local area, and is an ideal starting point for anyone wishing to begin their family history."

The Archives and Local History Centre is located on the Tipton Road in Dudley, next to the Black Country Museum (DY1 4SQ).

For more information please pop into the centre, call 01384 812770 or visit www.dudley.gov.uk/archives

Visit library for new connection

DUDLEY libraries free wi-fi service is receiving an upgrade thanks to a successful bid to Arts Council England.

WiFi in all Dudley libraries, library links and archives will be upgraded to the council's free borough wide DudleyConnect service, scheduled to go live on February 15.

DudleyConnect is the new public WiFi service recently introduced in various locations across Dudley, giving members of the public safe and easy access to the internet using their own mobile devices.

Once registered, users can use the wifi in any connected venue including libraries, Dudley Council Plus, Himley and Priory Halls, Dudley and Stourbridge Town Halls, Cornbow Hall, Mary Stevens Park cafe and leisure centres.

The new free, public access wifi will no longer require library visitors to log on using their membership card. People can sign up to the wifi either through their social media accounts or via email to create an account.

Once registered, a device will automatically connect to the service whenever a device is within range of an enabled access point, allowing an equal level of access to everyone who uses Dudley Connect. Users will also be able to find out about the latest news, information and offers from the council when they register.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "We've been offering free wifi at libraries since 2011, but this new upgrade makes registering and using wifi simpler and allows users to access this free facility in a range of council buildings.

"As a community council we are always looking for new ways to help our residents and this roll-out of our free wifi service makes connecting with the council even easier."

Councillor David Sparks, cabinet member responsible for ICT services, said: "As a community council we are always looking for new ways to improve the way people interact with the council.

"People visiting our venues should expect the very best service and facilities and wifi is just part of this.

"It will have a huge impact for the events that many of them host such as weddings at Priory Hall and Himley Hall and the wide range of shows at the town halls. I hope people make use of these valuable facilities."

Libraries will be helping those new to public wifi to stay safe online, offering advice during Internet Safety Week in February, and running Stay Safe Online sessions for families will be offered in libraries during half term.

For more information about DudleyConnect visit http://www.dudley.gov.uk/dudleyconnect/public-wifi/

Councillor David Sparks, cabinet member for ICT services

Range of services for its customers

FROM April 4, Dudley town centre-based Castle & Crystal Credit Union will make some changes, but will continue to provide a wide range of services for customers.

The credit union office in New Street, Dudley will not be providing an over-the-counter facility for cash withdrawal after April 4.

This is due to ever rising costs that are associated with this service which the credit union has been absorbing for a number of years. Castle & Crystal do not believe in passing on the extra costs to their members as it is run on a not-for-profit basis.

This small change means people will not be able to withdraw cash from inside the branch. However, this will not affect the other facilities for members who will still be able to continue to use all the other services available including online banking, telephone banking and BACS transfers at no cost. A pre-paid card is also available for members to use at ATMs, supermarkets and online.

People can still sign up to become new members at the branch and apply for loans. Credit Union staff will be happy to answer any queries that members may have with regard to the change to service. They can also offer advice and support on all aspects of accounts held, including internet banking registration, obtaining a prepaid card, using the telephone banking system or amending credits. Castle & Crystal also offers a range of mutual and ethical savings accounts so you can choose to save for particular occasions such as Christmas or holidays. Affordable loans are also available and suited to individual needs at rates that are easily repayable.

Full details of all the services available at Castle & Crystal Credit Union are available on the website www.castleandcrystal.co.uk Phone 01384 815771 or visit 25 New Street, Dudley. Alternatively visit the facebook page CastleCrystalCreditUnion or contact them through twitter @Castle_Crystal.

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Civic awards launch

UNSUNG community heroes across Dudley are set to be honoured as the mayor today launched a search for the borough's silent stars.

Mayor, Councillor Steve Waltho, urged people to nominate those who go above and beyond for special recognition.

The winners will receive unique, hand-crafted glassware at the Mayor's Ball and Civic Awards in March this year, in association with Halesowen-based security specialists Custom Technology Solutions.

People have three months to nominate those who go above and beyond in six categories, all named after borough greats. They are the Duncan Edwards award for sport, sponsored by Harry Jones Fun Fairs, the Cedric Hardwicke award for arts sponsored by Stourbridge College, the Frank Foley award for community spirit sponsored by Sanders and Co Solicitors, the Thomas Attwood award for education which is sponsored by The Label People, the Mike Holder award for business sponsored by Forces Recruitment Services and the William Shenstone award for environment, sponsored by Jessup Brothers.

Nominations for this year's awards are now open and people will be able to put names forward until February 14.

Councillor Steve Waltho, Mayor of Dudley, said: "We have some amazing people in this borough who work tirelessly for the benefit of others. The awards are about giving community heroes the recognition they deserve and I hope people will come forward and let us know about these unsung heroes."

"The annual ball is the perfect opportunity to celebrate the work of the winners and I am very much looking forward to meeting them on the night."

There is also a seventh trophy, the Mayor's Pride of Dudley Award, which will be decided by a public vote next month. The mayor will choose four people or groups he feels have stood out to him on his civic engagements so far in his mayoral year.

The public will then have the chance to vote online for the winner. Nominations cannot be put forward for this particular award. A judging panel will decide the other six categories.

The winners and runners-up will be presented with their prize – a trophy and a certificate by the Mayor of Dudley at the Mayor's Ball and Civic Awards at the Copthorne Hotel, Brierley Hill . The annual ball raises thousands of pounds for the mayor's chosen charities each year and award winners will have the chance to celebrate their achievements with distinguished guests.

Last year's Mayor's award winners, the Friends of Priory Park and the Green have backed the awards and urged people to help highlight the work of unsung community volunteers.

The group wowed the public with their tireless commitment to the open space, and received the most votes online. They have gone from strength to strength since winning the award, and have secured a £10,000 lottery grant to put on musical performances to the public in the park this year.

Honoured

Mariann Harris, chair of the Friends of Priory Park and The Green, said: "We were really honoured to receive the award. It was great just to be involved in such an important awards initiative. The awards really helped us to maintain that level of support from the volunteers and we have had more successes this year, securing funding.

"There are lots of groups and individuals who do similar work across the borough and I hope people get involved in this year's awards to give them the recognition they deserve."

People can nominate online at www.dudley.gov.uk/civicawards or can pick up a nomination form from libraries and leisure centres across the borough. Alternatively contact communications and public affairs on 01384 817449 for a form. People can also buy tickets for the ball by calling 01384 815211.

Completed forms should be sent to Mayor's Civic Awards nominations, communications and public affairs, Dudley Council, FREEPOST MID22308, Dudley, DY1 1BR by February 14.

Councillor Steve Waltho, Mayor of Dudley, and Jayne Waltho, Mayoress, launch the Civic Awards

Businesses back town regeneration

SCORES of new businesses have opened in Dudley town centre generating hopes of a continued revival of the town's fortunes.

Town centre champions say 14 businesses including shops, a bakery, a restaurant and a pub have launched in Dudley in the last six months.

And they hope the upward trend to attract new businesses into the town will continue throughout 2016.

This news comes on the back of the completion of the £6.7m regeneration of Dudley town centre, which was part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

In addition, £2.8 million has been invested into restoring key historic buildings in Dudley town centre to create or safeguard jobs as part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative.

Deana George of Deana Ann Flowers, a new Dudley business

Backed by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with funding from English Heritage, Dudley Council as well as the Homes and Communities Agency, there has been substantial restoration work to much-loved buildings in the town, many of which have been put back into use over the past five years.

All this, say town centre bosses, has helped start a much hoped-for turn-around for the historic town.

New businesses that have opened in the last six months include the Saracen's Head pub and The Glasshouse bistro in Stone Street Square, the Dessert Corner pudding and ice cream cafe in New Street, a property business, two dress shops, a florist, a bakery and the opening of the Black Country T Shirts shop on Castle Street just before Christmas.

These business unveilings follow the successful re-launch of the popular Arcade Toy Shop in Fountain Arcade, in 2015.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "This influx of new businesses to Dudley town centre is a fantastic start for 2016. So much has been done to enrich the town centre, from improving buildings to adding attractive artwork and lighting systems.

"We believe this has helped attract businesses like The Old Glasshouse bistro into Dudley and we hope this is the start of a continued upward trend."

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Fostering drop-in sessions

People interested in fostering can find out more at drop-in sessions being held by Dudley Council's fostering service.

The service is looking for great new foster carers to provide homes for looked after children in the borough.

The sessions are at the Copthorne Hotel, Brierley Hill on Monday, January 25, Wednesday, February 24, and Monday, March 14, from 6.30 to 8.30pm.

It's is a great opportunity for people who have an interest in fostering to find out more by speaking informally to a member of the fostering team and also some of Dudley's existing carers.

A vast range of people foster

Campaign

The service also recently launched a campaign 'I foster, you can too' to encourage people to realise the vast range of people who can foster and the type of children who need homes.

Dudley fostering offers a rewarding career, 24-hour support, training and guidance 365 days a year and a range of fostering options.

The team is keen to hear from anyone interested in fostering but in particular from those who would like to care for teenagers, children with disabilities or those who have the ability to take more than one child so brothers and sisters can stay together.

People can find out more about the drop in session and fostering by emailing fosteringrecruitment@dudley.gov.uk visiting www.dudley.gov.uk/fostering or calling the service on 01384 815833.

Properties available now

Dudley Council has a number of unfurnished flats and maisonettes across the borough available for rent.

These properties are not exclusive to Dudley borough residents and you do not have to be on the housing register to apply.

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Renting from Dudley Council provides an economical alternative to privately rented accommodation. We do not ask for a deposit or any administration costs.

Lettings will be subject to references and checks.

From the 1 February potential tenants will be able to view details about the available properties online at www.dudleyathome.org.uk

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Available properties are updated daily.

On standby to show true grit

A fleet of vehicles is ready to keep winter weather at bay

The mountain of gritting salt dwarfs this machinery

PEOPLE can get up to the minute information on gritting and other Dudley Council services this winter with a range of online resources.

Dudley Council's Weather Watch web page is packed full of key information as the winter begins to take a grip on the borough.

It includes gritting runs and routes, grit bin locations and general information about the teams who work round the clock to help keep the roads moving during the bad weather.

School closures, bin collections and other council services affected by the weather are also included on the page, as well as advice on keeping well and warm during the winter.

Flurries of snow are expected over the next few days and council bosses are keen to keep people up to date with their work throughout the winter.

People will be able to get the latest updates from the page via the council's e-bulletin, twitter and Facebook. It is part of Dudley's commitment as a community council to offer people more ways than ever before of communicating with the council.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "As part of our pledge to be a community council we are keeping people informed and up to date is an essential part of our work during the winter.

"The more information people have on things like roads and gritting, the better they can plan their journeys on the roads and their days over the winter period."

The council has a team of 40 gritters who work in shifts around the clock to monitor the weather for any expected plunge in temperatures or snowfall.

Clear

The gritting team, based at the council's Lister Road depot, will work around the clock to keep almost 300 miles of roads clear during severe weather. The council has 5,600 tonnes of grit which will last the winter period.

The council's weather watch page can be found at www.dudley.gov.uk and will be updated throughout the snow. Updates will also be posted on the council's @dudleymbc twitter feed by following #WMGrit which also includes gritting updates from neighbouring Black Country authorities.

Updates are also posted on the council's Dudley borough Facebook page, throughout the winter weather. People can 'like' the page to get the latest on school closures and other weather related information throughout the day.

Information will also be added to the council's popular e-bulletin service. People can join the tens of thousands who have already signed up to the email information service, to get the latest news during the snow and ice.

People can sign up by emailing community.council@dudley.gov.uk with their postcode.

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Taxi rank is asset for passengers

Councillor Richard Body

An online tool which allows taxi passengers to rate their ride has been hailed a huge asset by council bosses.

Dudley Taxi Advisor allows people to rate their journey, driver and travel experience in the cab.

The online system gives people the chance to answer a short number of questions about the taxi service and provide overall service satisfaction ratings. The move has not only been hailed as open and transparent, but also a boost to people's wellbeing and safety.

Councillor Richard Body, chairman of the taxis committee, said: "This is such an important resource and I would urge people to make full use of it whenever travelling in and around the borough.

"The feedback we, and the taxi companies get help us make sure we are running the best and safest service we can.

"Best of all, the information is all public so potential passengers can make informed choices before travelling."

Dudley Council's Taxi Advisor service is available on the council's website at www.dudley.gov.uk

Town hall shows to be rich and varied

THERE'S something for everyone at Dudley Town Hall this spring season, with a big focus on music.

The Soul Survivors return on February 6 with their mix of classic soul and British rhythm and blues. They'll be performing sets by Otis Redding, Sam & Dave, The O'Jays, The Detroit Spinners, Isley Brothers and Marvin Gaye.

Towards the end of the month, it's Queen Mary Ballroom Revival Night on February 19, harking back to the 60s and mid 70s, celebrating great places like The Jazz Club, The Crypt, The Midland Red Club, Kingswinford YC, The Summerhill, The Kingfisher and of course, The Queen Mary Ballroom. Enjoy the hits with discs spun by DJs Oscar Michael and Kenny Lee.

Halfway to Paradise – The Billy Fury Story returns on March 18. Billy's original band, Fury's Tornadoes will perform timeless hits including Last Night Was Made for Love, I Will, Jealousy and Halfway to Paradise. There's more on March 22 with a matinee performance from Memories are Made of Hits, playing 50s and 60s tunes.

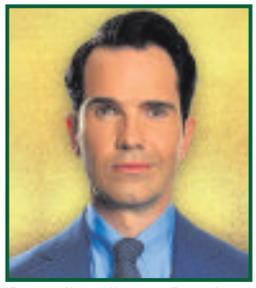
Wrestling has proved popular in the last few years and there are two chances to see All Star Superslam Wrestling when the high energy show makes half-term appearances on March 31 and October 27.

Northern Soul lovers are in for a double treat with performances on April 16 and October 15. It's a chance to relive the days of legendary venues like Wigan Casino, Twisted Wheel and The Torch with local and guest DJs.

Motown returns to the Midlands with Motown Club and Soul Night on April 15 and October 14.

Comic Jimmy Carr is performing at the venue on June 17 with his 'The Best of, Ultimate, Gold, Greatest Hits' tour, but tickets have sold quickly and only a handful are left.

Further afield in Stourbridge, the National Theatre Live programme is developing a following with performances of black comedy Hangmen starring David Morrissey on March 3, and the Kenneth Branagh directed Romeo and Juliet on July 7. Stourbridge will also be home to comedy with a performance by musical comedian and star of Radio 4's The Now Show, Mitch Benn on April 26. The laughs keep on coming when a stage version of Spike Milligan's Puckoon takes to the stage on May 11. The town hall welcomes Miss-Leading Ladies for the first time on May 20. Ria Jones and Ceri Dupree will be entertaining audiences with their performances of works by some of Hollywood's greatest divas. including Ethel Merman, Doris Day and Marlene Dietrich in a show directed by Sarah-Louise Young of Julie Madly Deeply and Fascinating Aida fame.



Comedian Jimmy Carr is at Dudley Town Hall in June

Visit www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/entertainment-live/ for tickets.

Health care tips

People will be able to get top tips on preventative health care services which are available across the Dudley borough at the next round of the community forums.

Health and social care professionals will be speaking to people at all of the 10 forums which run from January 25-February 3.

They will be giving advice on keeping well over the winter months as well as talking about community health care services which people can access to avoid a stay in hospital.

It is part of the regular run of community forums which aims to give people more access than ever before to the council in line with the authority's commitment to being a 'community council'.

Councillor Pete Lowe, leader of the council, said:"The latest round of forums is an ideal opportunity for people to come along and speak to health care professionals about these important services. At the same time, people will be able to discuss issues in their communities with councillors who are only too happy to help.

"We pride ourselves on constantly looking for new ways to discuss services with people and work with communities to tackle issues with them."

The forums give people the opportunity to raise issues or concerns in their communities as well as discuss ideas for improvements.

The latest round begins on January 25 with Coseley East and Sedgley community forum, which takes place at Age Concern Sedgley, Ettymore Road. On the same night Gornal, Upper Gornal and Woodsetton community forum, will be at Lower Gornal Royal British Legion, Ruiton Street, Dudley.

Halesowen North and Halesowen South community forum, will be at Leasowes High School, Kent Road, on January 26. Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews and Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood community forum, takes place on the same night at Dudley Wood Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Dudley Wood Road.

Councillor Pete Lowe

Norton, Pedmore and Stourbridge East, Wollaston and Stourbridge Town community forum, will be welcoming people to Ham Dingle Primary School, Old Ham Lane, on January 27. People will also be able to go to Castle and Priory, St James's and St Thomas's community forum, at St John's Church, St John's Road, on the same night.

On February 2, Kingswinford North and Wall Heath, Kingswinford South and Wordsley community forum, takes place at Kingswinford Royal British Legion, Summerhill.

Amblecote, Cradley and Wollescote, Lye and Stourbridge North community forum, will be at Providence Methodist Church, Colley Orchard, on February 3. On the same night Belle Vale, Hayley Green and Cradley South community forum, will be at Lutley Community Centre, Brookwillow Road, Halesowen. Also on February 3, people will be able to pop along to Brierley Hill, Brockmoor and Pensnett community forum, at Nine Locks Community Centre, Hill Street, Brierley Hill.

All the forums start at 6.30pm.

Made by Me' is a series of adult craft sessions, walks and talks

There's something for everyone

Children can get really crafty

The Red House Glass Cone is a popular attraction in the area

Arts and crafts sessions with museums services

MUSEUMS aren't just places to stand and stare; they can also be places of creative activity and relaxation.

Dudley Museums Service runs a range of arts and craft activities for all ages at their two venues Dudley Museum & Art Gallery and the Red House Glass Cone, as well as taking their interactive service out on the road to schools, community groups and outdoor events. Free family trails are available every school holiday and once a month drop in to a free Sticky Saturday session.

'Made by Me' is a series of adult craft sessions, walks and talks. Relaxed and informal, whether an avid crafter or a beginner, if you have a desire to meet people come and give it a go. Participants can enjoy chatting, having a cuppa and getting away from the stresses of everyday life for a few hours of 'me' time.

'Made by Me' is based at Wordsley's Red House Glass Cone and features a regular Fabric Faffers group which introduces participants to a new fabric manipulation technique each session. Spring's programme includes Love Bugs on February 5, a felted Easter egg on March 4, tote bags on April 15 and sewing on May 6.

Classes

Also for adults are one-off craft classes which include activities such as bead making on January 22, Easter crafts on May 18, macramé on April 22 and quilling on May 20. At all of the adult craft sessions, participants learn a new skill in a welcoming environment and make new friends on the way.

Children get their turn with a series of bookable and drop-in craft sessions at the Red House Cone. Drop-in sessions include making a glass love bug on February 6, glass gifts for mothering Sunday on March 5, and glass sun catchers on May 7. For families who want to get a date in the diary there are bookable sessions to make fused glass aliens on February 17 and fused glass cats and dogs on April 6. Both of these sessions are suitable for families aged five years and over.

For youngsters aged eight to 12 years, interested in developing their science, technology, engineering and maths skills the Cone runs a monthly STEM club where they can explore the properties of different materials and conduct experiments while overseen by trained staff. Sessions run on February 6, March 5, May 7 and June 11 and must be pre-booked.

At Dudley Museum, there are free monthly Sticky Saturday sessions in the afternoon and cinema screenings in the morning. Places are free but need to be booked in advance. Call the museum on 01384 815575 to find out what the next film is. Dates for both are February 13, March 12, April 9, May 14 and June 11.

While on site youngsters can enjoy the Dinosaur exhibition, First World War exhibition, complete with trench and visit the Duncan Edward's gallery.

For details on any of the craft activities call 01384 815571 or contact by email redhouse.cone@dudley.gov.uk

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Celebrate the past, present and future

THERE is so much to see and do in Dudley. Here are just a few ideas on how best to spend leisure time in the area.

Step back in time at the Black Country Living Museum and experience the authentic sights, sounds, smells and tastes from the past.

Here, you can meet costumed characters in original shops, houses and workshops or tuck into traditional Hobbs fish and chips before sampling a pint of beer in the Bottle and Glass Inn.

Discover the art of legging inside Dudley Canal Tunnel at Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust. Experience the 45 minute skipper guided tour into the fantastic limestone mines. Watch the light spectacular show and the new audio visual display inside the caverns. Explore the recently opened Portal Building and sample the mouth watering delights inside the 'Gongoozler' restaurant.

Get up close and personal with lions and tigers, snakes and spiders at Dudley Zoological Gardens. Visit the UK's largest colony of Humboldts in Penguin Bay. If you fancy becoming a 'Zookeeper for a Day' there are fun-filled 'Zookeeper Day Experiences' available that will create a lasting memory.

Stourbridge has been home to glassmaking for over 400 years. Explore the Stourbridge Glass Quarter and watch the art of glass blowing, marvel at the 100ft Red House Glass Cone, one of only four left in the UK. Why not enjoy browsing around the craft studios and gift shop on site and try a homemade cake and hot chocolate in the Red Cone Coffee House whilst you're there. 'Have a go craft activity sessions' are available for people of all ages across Dudley Museums Service.

Have your own bespoke piece of glass made at Ruskin Glass Centre and wander around the plentiful craft studios on site and taste the appetising selection of hot and cold foods in the organic cafe whilst you are there.

Webb Corbett Visitor Centre offers free heritage tours and a chance for you to learn about the history of glassmaking in the area.

Purchase a range of beautiful handmade lead crystal glass at Tudor Crystal and take part in an informative guided tour of the factory (small charge applies). Entrance to the Glass Quarter attractions are free of charge and free car parking is also available.

There are four magnificent and historic town halls in the borough showcasing Dudley's Entertainment Live! Programme of top quality performances with a variety of comedy, music and theatre to appeal to all tastes.

With 16 miles of navigable canals, seven local nature reserves and one national nature reserve and a number of local parks offering a range of walks, events and activities; whatever you decide to do there is plenty to keep you busy.

There is so much to see and do in the borough Dudley really does offer an exciting mix of visitor attractions, entertainment and events throughout the year.

For details of things to see and do visit www.discoverdudley.org.uk

Explore the Stourbridge Glass Quarter and its varied attractions

Enjoy a range of walking events

Back in time at Black Country Living Museum

Dudley Zoological Gardens are always popular

Theatres and town halls showcase many acts

DUDLEY CANAL & TUNNEL TRUST

Serving LavAzza coffee and homemade cakes, as well as fantastic meals, Dudley Canal Trusts new restaurant is a great venue to meet and chat, or come out for a fabulous meal.

Open Monday to Sunday, 10am till 9pm, our fully licensed restaurant offers a full menu to cater for all.

Our *early bird offer* of

2 MAINS FOR £10

is available Monday to Friday, 12 till 2pm, and 5pm till 7pm.
Sunday Roast Lunch is available weekly from 12 till 3pm.

Book now for our Valentines Meal and Mothering Sunday Carvery.

501 Birmingham New Rd, Dudley, DY1 4SB - 0121 520 3200, or find us on Dudley Canal Trust website

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The Lenches Bridge Pub

We are now officially open

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Please come and visit our stunning restaurant, we are now taking bookings for Valentine's Day.

• Takeaway orders are also available •

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Evenings
Choose from our Thai
River A La Carte Menu
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We would like to welcome all our diners to a
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Terms and conditions apply

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Mon - Sat 12pm - 3pm & 5.30pm - 11pm Sunday Carvery 12pm till 4pm

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fast theticket

On the case

An Inspector Calls at Wolverhampton Grand – Page 33

In a stew

Stewart Lee – Page 33

NATIVE MONSTER
Entertainment Unleashed

For full listings see **Express & Star** every Friday

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14 MAY • JERSEY BOYS • MAMMA MIA
28 MAY • WAR HORSE • MOTOWN • TOM JONES STORY
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YORK CRUISE, YORKSHIRE DALES STEAM & BOLTON ABBEY
2 DAYS £79.95
OVERNIGHT HALF BOARD
• Includes Yorkshire Dales Steam & visits to Bolton Abbey and Roman York plus River Cruise
SAT 26 MAR, 2, 30 APR, 21 MAY, 18 JUN, 9 JUL, 20 AUG, 3 SEP, 1 OCT

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2 DAYS £99.95
OVERNIGHT HALF BOARD
• Admission to Safari Park, Jungle Cruise, African Village, Longleat House & more plus visit to Bath
SAT 2, 30 APR, 4, 25 JUN, 16 JUL, 27 AUG

ISLE OF ARRAN & LOCH LOMOND CRUISE
5 DAYS £179.95
4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Adamton House Hotel
• Isle of Arran tour & Loch Lomond Cruise
MON 28 MAR, 18 APR, 30 MAY, 20 JUN, 18 JUL

FLYING SCOTSMAN AT SHILDON & BRONTE STEAM
2 DAYS £89.95
OVERNIGHT HALF BOARD
• See Scotsman at Shildon & Bronte Steam Train Ride
SAT 23, 30 JUL

SOUTHPORT KESWICK & SEVEN LAKES
5 DAYS £179.95
4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Scarisbrick Hotel, Southport
• Includes visits to Keswick, Kendal Market, Morecambe, Arnside plus Severn Lakes Circular Tour
MON 18 APR, 16 MAY, 13, 27 JUN, 11, 25 JUL, 1, 15 AUG

BABBACOMBE DEVON STEAM, CRUISE & CREAM TEA
5 DAYS FROM £179.95
4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Norcliffe Hotel
• Includes South Devon steam train ride & River Dart cruise, plus an afternoon Devon cream tea
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17, 24 JUN	6, 13, 20, 27 JUN	17, 24 JUN
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TOUR INCLUDES:
- 4 Nights Half Board
- Nightly entertainment
- Excursions

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Birmingham, Smethwick, West Bromwich, Dudley, Wolverhampton, Walsall

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Holidays are fully bonded. School Road, Gartocharn, G83 8RW

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Jason Derulo

Saturday, 6pm
Barclaycard Arena, B'ham
Hot on the heels of landing his fourth UK Number One single with 'Want To Want Me', the phenomenally successful Jason Derulo is now on tour. Aston Merrygold will support.
Visit **www.barclaycardarena.co.uk**

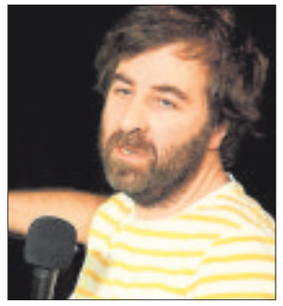
The Solid Life Of Sugar Water

Tuesday - Feb 6
Rep Theatre, B'ham
Phil and Alice are in love and healing wounds. Candid, uninhibited and visceral, this new play from the award-winning Jack Thorne is a tender portrait of loss, hurt and recovery.
Visit **www.birmingham-rep.co.uk**

Hozier

Tuesday, 7pm
O2 Academy, B'ham
The global star continues to soar with two Billboard Awards, a coveted Ivor Novello, stunning festival sets and now his one and only UK tour of 2016 before he works on a new album.
Visit **www.academymusicgroup.com**

David O'Doherty



Saturday, 8pm
Stafford Gatehouse
David O'Doherty, the Lidl Enya, the broken Bublé, is delighted to present an evening of talking and songs played on a stupid keyboard from 1986.
www.staffordgatehousetheatre.co.uk

POP & ROCK

TesseracT
Thu at 7pm, £13
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

Evil Scarecrow
Fri at 7pm, £10
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

The Classic Rock Show
Sat at 7.30pm, £22.50
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ.
Call 0121 780 3333

Jason Derulo
Sat at 6pm, £30.20 - £40.20
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, B1 2AA.
Call 0121 780 4141

Bootleg Abba: Abba Tribute, Bee Gees Fever: Bee Gees Tribute
Sat at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

The Rooz
Fri at 7pm,
The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham, B12 0LD.
Call 0121 753 1818

The Food Fighterz: Foo Fighters Tribute
Fri at 7pm,
The RoadHouse Birmingham, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Mayday Parade
Fri at 6.30pm, £16
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

Flash Of The Blade: Guts For Glory
Sat at 7pm,
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Massive Attack
Sat at 7pm - 11pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

The Cadillac Three
Thu at 7pm - 11pm,
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

Neck Deep
Mon at 7pm,
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

The Wedding Crashers
Tue at 8.30pm,
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

Louise Warren
Wed at 8.30pm,
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

Minus The Bear
Fri at 6pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

Ian McCulloch
Wed at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Whitesnake UK
Fri at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

The Carnival Of Madness
Tue at 7pm, £32.20
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, B1 2AA.
Call 0121 780 4141

Nekrogoblikon
Mon at 7pm,
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Sunflower Bean
Wed at 7.30pm,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

Awake By Design
Sat at 6.45pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

The Enid: Dust
Sat at 8pm,
The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, B16 8AE.
Call 0121 643 5858

Get Inuit
Tue at 8pm,
The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham, B5 4EG.
Call 0121 632 6756

Hozier
Tue at 7pm, £22.50
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

ACOUSTIC & FOLK

Chris Wood
Mon at 8pm, £13 - £15
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Gordie MacKeeman & His Rhythm Boys
Wed at 7.30pm,
Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, TF9 3AX.
Call 01630 654444

Transatlantic Sessions
Tue at 7.30pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

BLUES & JAZZ

Malija
Fri at 8pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Ricky Cool & The In Crowd
Thu at 9.30pm,
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

King Pleasure And The Biscuit Boys
Thu at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

CLASSICAL & OTHER MUSIC

Nigel Kennedy: The New Four Seasons
Sun at 7.30pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Musical Stars From The Midlands
Thu at 7pm,
Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ. Call 0121 780 3333

Del Camino
Fri at 10pm, £0 - £5
The Jam House, Birmingham, B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

CBSO 2015-16: Baiba Skride: Szymanowski
Thu at 7.30pm, £12.50 - £45
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

CBSO 2015-16: Smooth Classics
Fri at 7.30pm, £12.50 - £47
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

CLUBBING

Pure Jackin One Off Special
Fri - Sat at 10pm - 6am,
Nightingale Club, Birmingham, B5 6RD.
Call 0121 622 1718

Scroobius Pip Presents We Are Lizards
Sat - Sun at 9pm - 3am,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

This is Tmrw Presents Mike Skinner DJ Set
Fri - Sat at 9pm - 3am,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

THEATRE

The Gruffalo's Child
Thu at 1.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Jack And The Beanstalk: PwC
Thu at 7pm,
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

Entertaining Angels by Richard Everett
Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 7.30pm,
The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster, DY10 2RX.
Call 01562 743745

Anton & Erin: Just Gotta Dance
Sat at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, £19.50 - £45
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

The Solid Life Of Sugar Water
Tue at 8pm - 10.20pm, Wed at 8pm - 10.20pm, Thu at 8pm - 10.20pm,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

Hatstand
Mon at 7.30pm - 10.30pm,
Kitchen Garden Cafe, King's Heath, Birmingham, B14 7SA. Call 0121 443 4725

Land Of Our Fathers
Tue at 8pm - 10.20pm, Wed at 8pm - 10.20pm,
mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Death Of A Salesman; Crescent Theatre Company
Fri at 7.45pm, Sat at 2.45pm, 7.45pm,
The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, B16 8AE.
Call 0121 643 5858

Of Mice And Men
Thu at 7.30pm, £8.50 - £35
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

Showstopper! The Improvised Musical
Sat at 8pm,
mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

The Rocky Horror Show
Fri at 5.30pm, 8.30pm, Sat at 5.30pm, 8.30pm,
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

The Sensational 60s Experience
Sat at 7.30pm, £20 - £25
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

An Inspector Calls
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, Thu at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, £11.75 - £27.75
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

Macbeth
Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 2pm, 7.30pm, £8.50 - £35
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Brendan Cole: A Night To Remember
Fri at 7.30pm, £19.50 - £39.50
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

Aladdin
Fri at 2pm, 7.15pm, Sat at 2.30pm, 7.15pm, Sun at 1pm, 5.15pm, £14 - £42
Birmingham Hippodrome, B5 4TB.
Call 0844 338 5000

Tiptoe Through The Tombstones
Thu at 7.30pm, £7
Whittington Village Hall, Lichfield.
Call 01543 490355

COMEDY

Roadhouse Comedy
Mon at 8pm,
The RoadHouse Birmingham, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Carl Hutchinson: Learning The Ropes
Fri at 8pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Comedy Carousel
Thu at 7.30pm,
The Glee Club, Birmingham, B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

Stewart Lee: A Room With A Stew
Sun at 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

Rinkoo Barpaga: Am I Funny?
Sat at 7.30pm,
mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

David O'Doherty: We Are All In The Gutter But Some Of Us Are Looking At David O'Doherty
Sat at 8pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Hit revival of play calls at the Grand

Geoff Leesley as Mr Birley confronts Inspector Goole, Liam Brennan, in An Inspector Calls picture Mark Douet

STAGE and film director Stephen Daldry's award-winning National Theatre production of JB Priestley's classic thriller An Inspector Calls is staged at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday, February 2 to 6.

Stephen Daldry, the Oscar-nominated director best known for Billy Elliot and The Reader, won his first major directorial success in 1992 when his visionary revival of An Inspector Calls at the National Theatre.

The plays tells of a dinner party at the home of the wealthy Birling family shattered by the mysterious Inspector Goole and his investigation into the death of a woman.

Featuring Ian MacNeil's ingenious designs, a sweeping score by Oscar-winning composer Stephen Warbeck and atmospheric lighting by Rick Fisher, the production has received 19 international awards, including the Olivier Award for Best Revival, Best Director, Best Designer and Tony Awards on Broadway.

The production went on to be the longest running play revival in history, in the West End for six years, on Broadway, across Australia, the United States, Japan and Europe, and has completed seven major UK tours.

Comic Stew's Room service

SOLIHULL-RAISED TV comic Stewart Lee will headline Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre to prepare for a new series on BBC 2.

Lee will perform Room With A Stew at the city centre venue on Sunday.

The show will feature fresh material for his new TV show Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle.

Lee's recent work has won starry reviews from critics with the Guardian describing him as more playful and skilful than ever. The Times wrote: "What is exhilarating is how many surprises he still throws in and how deft his jumps are from one tone to another... invigorating."

Lee follows his muse and delights when jokes arrive. "Sometimes I read that I'm this left-wing comic who just goes on about politics the whole time. Other times I read that it's just surreal nonsense about crisps. It's both of those.

Terrifying

"Or I read there's no jokes and it's just about cleverness of structure and then I read a criticism of the last series that it was an obvious bid for mainstream acceptance by being full of jokes. It's a lot of things.

"I don't know where the ideas come from and it's terrifying. They seem to be absolute flukes.

"When I was in my 20s I'd walk around with a notebook all the time and make sure I wrote down anything that occurred to me.

"Now I'm just hoping that some sort of event will descend on me."

Shows are Strictly for fans of dance

KEEP dancing with Strictly Come Dancing professionals this weekend. Tomorrow (Fri) Brendan Cole brings his A Night To Remember show to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre. A veteran of all 13 series of Strictly, Brendan won the first with Natasha Kaplinsky and in the latest partnered Kirsty Gallacher.

On Saturday it's the Just Gotta Dance show with Anton & Erin at Birmingham Symphony Hall. Australian Erin Boag took part in series one to ten of Strictly, reaching second place with Colin Jackson. Anton du Beke is a veteran of all 13, third with Lesley Garrett in series one before reaching the final again last year with Katie Derham.

Nigel's fresh take on Four Seasons

VIOLIN virtuoso Nigel Kennedy found fame with his two-million selling 1989 recording of Vivaldi's Four Seasons and, after experiments with jazz, rock and Jewish klezmer music, has returned to his most famous work for a concert at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday.

The 59-year-old former boy prodigy has strong associations with Birmingham, not least because the Brighton-born musician is an avid Aston Villa fan.

He will perform a fresh take on The Four Seasons, after his latest recording which blends Vivaldi with jazz and rock, and his own compositions in The English Collection.

Solo gig by Mac of The Bunnymen

ECHO and The Bunnymen frontman Ian McCulloch will be giving a rare solo performance at the Robin 2 in Bilston.

Formed in Liverpool in 1978, The Bunnymen became one of the most popular indie rock bands of the 1980s.

The band's top ten singles included The Cutter, The Killing Moon and Nothing Lasts Forever. They released 12 studio albums between 1980 and 2014.

McCulloch will play stripped down versions of band's classic tracks, as well as songs from his own four-album solo back catalogue on Wednesday, February 3. Tickets cost £18.50 or £20 on the door for this seated show

CHOICE

Crystal Yu

Casualty (BBC1, 9.10pm)
The day of Dixie's disciplinary hearing arrives, but things get off to a bad start when she is held up by an incident, and when Jess asks her to move to Cornwall with her and Olivia, the paramedic must decide whether to follow her head or her heart. Lily desperately hopes to re-establish her bond with Ethan by trying to convince him to stay, Connie tries to come up with a meaningful gift to make up for missing Jacob's birthday, and Robyn's appearance on the cover of Holby Pulse only serves to increase Big Mac's feeling of shame over abandoning Noel to his mystery mugger. Medical drama, starring Jane Hazlegrove, Michael Stevenson, Charles Venn, Amanda Mealing and Crystal Yu.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry's Foolproof Cooking. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **1.00** Tennis: Australian Open Highlights. **2.30** Bargain Hunt. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Final Score. **5.10** Now You See It. **5.40** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

6.00 Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman present a star-studded version of the unorthodox general knowledge quiz.

6.50 The Getaway Car. Brothers Mitz and Dee, husband-and-wife duo Charlie and Kate, best friends Chloe and Bethany, sisters Val and Babs and new couple Joseph and Karen tackle the Getaway Car circuit.

7.45 The Voice UK. Paloma Faith, Boy George, Will.i.am and Ricky Wilson appraise the talents of more would-be stars as the spinning-chair singing contest continues. This week marks the fourth of seven "blind audition" rounds, and tensions are beginning to rise between the superstar coaches. Kevin Simm, former member of pop group Liberty X, shows off his skills as a solo artist, and his performance causes a dramatic clash between two members of the panel. Plus, 16-year-old aspiring star Heather Cameron-Hayes, rockabilly singer Sammy-Jo Evans and duo The Dublin City Rounders take to the stage.

9.10 Casualty. Dixie's disciplinary hearing gets off to a bad start, and she considers moving to Cornwall with Jess and Olivia. Meanwhile, Lily tries to re-establish her bond with Ethan.

10.00 The National Lottery Live. Actor Matthew Kelly joins Gaby Roslin at Lottery HQ, where he is invited to press the Lotto button and reveal the all-important winning numbers.

10.10 BBC News; Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest FA Cup fourth-round ties; National Lottery Update.

11.50 Film: Lara Croft: Tomb Raider – The Cradle of Life. (2003)

1.35 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.40** BBC News.

BBC2

6.30 Race to Super Bowl 50. (R) **7.20 Film:** Cowboy. (1958) **8.45 Film:** The Quick Gun. (1964) **10.10** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **11.10** Natural World. (R) **12.00** Best Bakes Ever. (R) **12.45** Best Bakes Ever. (R) **1.30 Film:** Fire Down Below. (1957) Romantic drama, starring Rita Hayworth and Robert Mitchum. **3.20 Film:** Film TBA. **5.35** Celebrity Antiques Road Trip. (R)

6.35 King George and Queen Mary: The Royals Who Rescued the Monarchy. The first of two documentaries providing an insight into the lives of George V and Queen Mary, revealing their lasting influence on Britain's monarchy. The opening film focuses on King George, highlighting how a Victorian-age conservative ended up becoming an unlikely moderniser. The outbreak of the First World War prompted George to reconsider the solidarity of Europe's royal families, leading him to create the House of Windsor and embrace democratic reform. The programme also explores his strained relationship with his children, and the contrasting kinship he found with his granddaughter Princess Elizabeth. (R)

7.35 Dad's Army. The air-raid wardens have to share the church hall with the Home Guard after their HQ is bombed, but Hodge's men are terribly disruptive and soon cause mayhem. (R)

8.05 The Real Marigold Hotel. Eight celebrities embark on an experimental adventure to Jaipur in India, to test whether they can set up a more rewarding retirement than in the UK. (R)

9.05 Live at the Apollo. Leading performers on the stand-up circuit share their light-hearted views on modern life in this show recorded before a packed house at London's Hammersmith Apollo. (R)

9.50 Insert Name Here. Comedy panel game in which host Sue Perkins asks teams captained by Richard Osman and Josh Widdicombe to answer questions about famous people who share a name. (R)

10.20 Film: Perfume: The Story of a Murderer. (2006) Period thriller, with Ben Whishaw, Dustin Hoffman and Alan Rickman.

12.35 Film: Bright Days Ahead. (2013) **2.05** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. **8.30** Scrambled!: Jessie. **9.05** Scrambled!: The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.30** Judge Rinder. (R) **2.30** Tipping Point. (R) **3.30** Doc Martin. (R) **4.30** The Martin Lewis Money Show. (R) **5.00** The Chase. (R)

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.15 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 New You've Been Framed! More comical mishaps filmed by viewers, including a mechanic's inventive use for an airbag, a disastrous moped selfie, and the dangers of wearing a monkey as a wig.

7.00 Ninja Warrior UK. The semi-finals arrive, abd Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara challenge the contestants who survived the heats to test their endurance on the obstacle course once again.

8.00 Take Me Out. Paddy McGuinness continues to arrange more dates for his 30 single women. This time, the "love lift" delivers hypnotist Ben from London, Essex-based broker Harry, Edinburgh landscape gardener David and Paul, a "body double" from Dublin. All four men are given a chance to win over Paddy's singletons, but to secure a date they must first get the female participants to keep their lights on as a sign of approval.

9.15 The Jonathan Ross Show. The host is joined in the studio by actress Brenda Blethyn, who discusses the return of Northumberland-set detective drama Vera, and re-emerging singer-songwriter Craig David.

10.15 ITV News; Weather.

10.30 Film: The Lost World: Jurassic Park. (1997) Steven Spielberg's adventure sequel, with Jeff Goldblum and Julianne Moore.

12.45 Jackpot247. **3.00** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** Snowdonia Marathon. **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** The Morning Line. **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Cheltenham and Doncaster. **4.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.30** Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.00 Come Dine with Me. It is the final day of the dinner party contest in Derby and the turn of confident triathlete David Morris to host, before the winner of the £1,000 prize is announced. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Great Canal Journeys. Timothy West and Prunella Scales travel from Birmingham to Braunston to attend a festival of vintage canal boats, aided on the tricky journey by their son Sam and Juliet, Timothy's daughter from his first marriage. Along the way, they meet a 78-year-old boatman, who reveals how he was born on a canal boat, and unveil a plaque dedicated to a woman who dedicated her life to preserving Britain's canals. (R)

8.00 Amazing Spaces: Floating Homes. George Clarke follows designer friend Max McMurdo as he builds his own floating home in a 40ft shipping container, mooring it in a local marina to begin a new life on the water. (R)

9.00 Film: Now You See Me. (2013) Premiere. Four magicians use their lavish stage shows as cover for a series of seemingly impossible heists, and give away the money they steal to their audiences. An FBI agent assembles a team of experts to discover how the baffling robberies are committed and what the secret agenda behind the crime spree is. Crime thriller, starring Jesse Eisenberg, Mark Ruffalo, Woody Harrelson and Isla Fisher.

11.15 Film: The Hole. (2009) Horror, starring Chris Massoglia and Haley Bennett.

1.05 Hollyoaks. (R) **3.10** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. (R) **4.05** Beat My Build. (R) **5.00** Deal or No Deal. (R) **5.50** How I Met Your Mother. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **8.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **9.30** The Saturday Show. **11.45** Funniest Fails, Falls & Flops. (R) **12.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.15** Now That's Funny! (R) **3.15** Puppies Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **4.15** Pets Make You Laugh Out Loud 2. (R) **5.10** Toddlers Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R)

6.10 Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. A tenant who turned out to be a confidence trickster and a letting agent who locked a couple out of their own buy-to-let investment property. Last in the series. (R)

7.00 World War II in Colour. This edition focuses on Japan's early involvement in the war, including its attack on the US Navy at Pearl Harbour in December 1941, which led to America's entry into the conflict. (R)

7.55 World War II Battlefield Recovery. The excavation team explores trenches in Latvia's Courland peninsula, where they uncover a live shell, and the bodies of fallen German and Russian soldiers. Last in the series.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 The Championship: Football League Tonight. Highlights of the latest Championship matches, including Bristol City v Birmingham City, Huddersfield Town v Cardiff City, and Rotherham United v Charlton Athletic.

9.30 Goal Rush: Football League Tonight. A round-up of all the goals and talking points from League One and League Two, with fixtures including Peterborough United v Burton Albion and Plymouth Argyle v Wycombe Wanderers.

10.00 Celebrity Big Brother. Catching up with the celebrities as they react to Friday night's eviction, revealing how the latest departure has affected the remaining contestants.

11.00 Fat, Fabulous and Filthy Rich. People who are cashing in on the fuller figure, from a woman blazing a trail in the plus-size world with dating sites to a man making large coffins. (R)

11.55 Access. (R)

12.05 SuperCasino. **3.10** Celebrity Big Brother. (R) **4.00** Celebrity Botched Up Bodies. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Don't Tell the Bride **8.00** Top Gear **9.10 Film:** Die Hard with a Vengeance (1995) **11.10** Family Guy **1.25** Siblings **1.55** Great Movie Mistakes V: Revenge of the Fifth **2.05 Film:** National Treasure: Book of Secrets (2007) **4.00** Close

BBC Four
7.00 How Earth Made Us **8.00** Shipwrecks: Britain's Sunken History **9.00** The Young Montalbano **10.45** Music Moguls: Masters of Pop **11.45** It's Only Rock 'n' Roll: Rock 'n' Roll at the BBC **12.45** Danny Baker's Great Album Showdown **1.45** Top of the Pops: 1981 **3.05** Sounds of the Eighties **3.35** Close

ITV2
12.20 Scorpion **1.20** You've Been Framed! Gold **1.50 Film:** Small Soldiers (1998) **4.00 Film:** The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas (2000) **5.50** Celebrity Catchphrase **6.50 Film:** The Mummy (1999) **9.15** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.15 Film:** Little Man (2006) **12.10** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **12.40** Beowulf: Return to the Shieldlands **1.40** Viral Tap **2.15** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.35** Planet's Funniest Animals **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3
12.00 Film: The Pure Hell of St Trinian's (1960) **2.00** The Return of Sherlock Holmes **4.15 Film:** Columbo: Murder with Too Many Notes (2000) **6.05** Midsomer Murders **10.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **12.05** Marchlands **1.05** The Return of Sherlock Holmes **2.00** Man About the House **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
12.45 Live Darts: The Masters. The afternoon session. **5.00** Storage Wars: Texas **7.00** Live Darts: The Masters. The evening session on day one. **11.00 Film:** Universal Soldier: Regeneration (2009) **1.00** The Sweeney **2.05** Highway Patrol **2.25** Movies Now **2.35** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.00 The Goldbergs **1.00** Come Dine with Me **3.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.00** The Goldbergs **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Safe House (2012) **11.15** Gogglebox **1.25** Virtually Famous **2.15** The Inbetweeners **3.05** The IT Crowd **4.00** Rules of Engagement **5.05** Revenge

Film4
1.00 The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (2010) **3.10** Beaches (1988) **5.35** California Man (1992) **7.15** Post Grad (2009) **9.00** Van Helsing (2004) **11.40** Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter (2012) **1.45** The French Connection (1971) **4.00** Close

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MNA Media

CHOICE

Matt Baker

Countryfile (BBC1, 7pm)
A round-up on how winter is affecting rural areas. Matt Baker visits a Teesdale hill farming couple who have become the stars of a documentary film, Ellie Harrison watches birds migrate in Gloucestershire, John Craven encounters a breed of hybrid wolves in Cumbria that are adapted to the cold, Sean Fletcher goes cod fishing on the North Yorkshire coast and Adam Henson reports on endangered sheep in North Ronaldsay. Including Weather For The Week Ahead.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.40** Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. **1.15** Songs of Praise. **1.50** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.35** The Great Sport Relief Bake Off. (R) **3.35** Match of the Day Live: The FA Cup.
6.30 BBC News.
6.50 Regional Programme.
7.00 Countryfile. A round-up on how winter is affecting rural areas, featuring reports on hill farming, migrating birds, hybrid wolves that have adapted to the cold, cod fishing and endangered sheep. Including Weather For The Week Ahead.
8.00 Call the Midwife. A rare disease spreads around Poplar Street, and Patsy and Dr Turner try to trace the outbreak to its source. Suspicion over the identity of the first carrier threatens to divide a previously close-knit family. Sister Winifred is forced to confront her prejudices while treating a patient, and Barbara worries about how Trixie will react when she agrees to go to dinner with Tom.
9.00 War & Peace. Pierre's eyes are opened to the horrors of war, Natasha falls ill and Andrei swears revenge as Napoleon's forces invade Russia and preparations are made to meet them in battle.
10.00 BBC News.
10.20 Regional Programme.
10.30 Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights. Action from today's fourth-round ties, which were Carlisle United v Everton at Brunton Park, and Milton Keynes Dons v Chelsea at Stadium mk.
11.00 Live at the Apollo. Sarah Millican hosts an evening of stand-up at the Apollo in Hammersmith, London. (R)
11.30 Film: My Brother the Devil. (2012) Premiere. Mo, the teenage son of an Egyptian immigrant to London, idolises his older brother Rashid, a drug dealer, and longs to follow in his footsteps. However, Rashid wants Mo to make something more of his life, while realisations about himself make him question his place in the criminal underworld. Drama, starring James Floyd.
1.15 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.20** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 The A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.00** The Secret History of the British Garden. **8.00** Countryfile. (R) **9.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. (R) **10.30** Best Bakes Ever. (R) **11.15** Best Bakes Ever. (R) **12.00 Film:** The Alamo. (2004) Historical Western, starring Dennis Quaid. **2.05** Tennis: Australian Open Highlights. **3.35 Film:** Ladies in Lavender. (2004) Period drama, starring Judi Dench and Maggie Smith. **5.15** Ski Sunday.
6.00 Film: John Carter. (2012) An American Civil War soldier is transported to an alien planet, which is also being torn apart by conflict. He intercedes in this struggle after rescuing a princess from captivity, and must win the trust of a fierce primitive tribe to save the world. Fantasy adventure based on Edgar Rice Burroughs' series of novels, starring Taylor Kitsch and Lynn Collins. Edited for daytime broadcast.
8.00 Dragons' Den. Evan Davis gives more would-be entrepreneurs the chance to pitch their ideas to panelists Deborah Meaden, Nick Jenkins, Peter Jones, Touker Suleyman and Sarah Willingham. Among the products up for inspection are a self-serve beer pump and a trailer tent that is tall enough to stand up in – but which proves harder to erect than its creator intended.
9.00 James May's Cars of the People. James charts the history of 4x4 vehicles from the jeeps of the Second World war onwards, revealing how they rose in popularity in everyday use and in rallies. He explores the rivalry between Land Rover and Land Cruiser, and puts some classic vehicles through their paces by driving up Mount Fuji and through the Mojave desert.
10.00 Film: True Grit. (2010) A farm girl recruits a hard-drinking, one-eyed marshal to help her track down the man who killed her father. The Coen brothers' Western, with Jeff Bridges and Hailee Steinfeld.
11.45 Film: Then She Found Me. (2007) A teacher abandoned by her husband and facing a mid-life crisis is unexpectedly reunited with her eccentric biological mother. Comedy drama, starring Helen Hunt and Bette Midler.
1.20 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **2.20** Holby City. (R) **3.15** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. **8.30** Scrambled!: Bear Grylls Survival School. **9.05** Scrambled!: The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.25** ITV News; Weather. **12.35** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.35** Judge Rinder. (R) **2.40** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **3.40 Film:** Diamonds Are Forever. (1971) James Bond spy adventure, starring Sean Connery.
6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.
6.15 ITV News; Weather.
6.30 Planet's Got Talent. The best and worst clips from the Got Talent franchise, featuring a stunt involving an exploding limousine and a man who smashes watermelons on his head. Narrated by Warwick Davis.
7.00 Beowulf: Return to the Shieldlands. The warrior and his allies try to make peace with a rival tribe, but are greeted with suspicion when they discover a terrible secret. David Bradley guest stars.
8.00 Vera. New series. A body is discovered on the Northumberland moors, and identified as a woman who made a distressed 999 call on the night of her death – suggesting she may have been abducted by someone she knew. Vera takes on the case, and discovers the victim was a controversial figure in her home town, who had a complicated relationship with her family and a number of well-hidden secrets.
10.00 ITV News; Weather.
10.15 Panda Babies. Vet Steve Leonard visits three panda reserves in China, following the development of several of these endangered animals from newborn to one-year-old toddlers. (R)
11.15 Premiership Rugby Union. Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman present action from the 10th round of fixtures.
12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **1.35** Location, Location, Location. (R) **2.35** The Simpsons. (R) **3.05** The Simpsons. (R) **3.30** The Simpsons. (R) **4.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD. **4.55** Channel 4 News. **5.20 Film:** The Incredibles. (2004) Pixar's animated adventure, with the voice of Craig T Nelson.
7.30 The Jump. New series. Davina McCall presents the third series of the celebrity winter sport challenge. The contestants in this year's show are Dean Cain, Sarah Harding, Linford Christie, James "Arg" Argent, Rebecca Adlington, Tina Hobley, Mark Francis Vandelli, Beth Tweddle, Tamara Beckwith, Brian McFadden, Louisa Lytton and Sid Owen, who spend six weeks living together in the Austrian Alps and competing in a series of sporting challenges. The first round sees them taking part in the death defying skeleton event, with the losers facing a live Air Jump to determine who will be eliminated.
9.00 Deutschland 83. Tischbier offers Moritz the chance to return to East Berlin, so he can donate a kidney to his mother. On his journey home, he is asked to deliver a mysterious package – but when a bombing suddenly occurs moments later, he begins to wonder what was in the box and races to prevent further bloodshed. In German.
10.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr invites Sean Lock and Miles Jupp to go up against Jon Richardson and Sara Pascoe in the words-and-numbers quiz, while Sam Simmons helps out in Dictionary Corner. (R)
10.55 Film: Sorority Row. (2009) Five female students accidentally cause the death of a friend, and are stalked years later by a mysterious killer seeking justice. Horror remake, with Briana Evigan and Leah Pipes.
12.50 Embarrassing Bodies: Back to the Clinic. (R) **1.45** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.00** Beat My Build. (R) **4.55** Hugh's 3 Good Things. (R) **5.10** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.45** Tickety Toc. (R) **6.55** Zack and Quack. (R) **7.05** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.20** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.35** Little Princess. (R) **7.50** Pip Ahoy! (R) **8.00** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.25** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.45** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **9.00** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.15** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** The Championship: Football League Tonight. (R) **11.00** Goal Rush: Football League Tonight. (R) **11.30** Funniest Fails, Falls & Flops. (R) **12.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **1.00 Film:** The Deep End of the Ocean. (1999) Drama, starring Michelle Pfeiffer. **3.15 Film:** No Reservations. (2007) Romantic comedy, with Catherine Zeta-Jones and Aaron Eckhart. **5.15 Film:** Hitch. (2005) Romantic comedy, starring Will Smith and Eva Mendes.
7.25 Film: The Wedding Date. (2005) A single woman is horrified by the thought of attending her sister's wedding alone, a task made all the more daunting by the presence of her ex-fiance. Taking the bull by the horns, she hires a male escort for the occasion – but her decision has unexpected results. Romantic comedy, starring Debra Messing, Jack Davenport, Amy Adams, Dermot Mulroney and Sarah Parish. Edited for language and sexual content.
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. The remaining housemates embark on their final week, knowing only one of them can be crowned Celebrity Big Brother winner on Friday night. This has certainly been one of the most tense and argumentative houses in recent history – can it possibly get any worse as the celebrities begin to eye up the prize?
10.00 Celebrity Botched Up Bodies. A former Miss England who nearly died of a blood clot caused by having her breast implants removed, and a reality TV contestant who received illegal injections. Last in the series.
11.00 Film: Red Dragon. (2002) Thriller prequel, with Anthony Hopkins.
1.20 The Philpotts: Britain's Worst Crimes. (R) **2.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes III: Not in 3D **7.05** Great TV Mistakes **7.35** The Voice UK **9.05 Film:** Meet the Parents (2000) **10.45** Russell Howard's Good News **11.15** Family Guy **12.20** Cuckoo **3.20** Emergency Rescue Down Under **3.50** Great Movie Mistakes V: Revenge of the Fifth **4.00** Close
BBC Four
7.00 Pierre Boulez at the BBC: Master and Maverick **8.00** Russia's Lost Princesses **9.00** Tales from the Royal Bedchamber **10.00 Film:** A Death Row Tale: The Fear of 13 (2015) **11.30** Horizon: What Is Reality? **12.30** The Brain with David Eagleman **1.30** Rock 'n' Roll America **2.30** Sounds of the Eighties **2.55** Danny Baker's Great Album Showdown **3.55** Close
ITV2
11.40 Take Me Out **1.00** Take Me Out – The Gossip **2.00 Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **3.45 Film:** The Mummy Returns (2001) **6.15 Film:** Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **8.00 Film:** The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (2012) **11.15 Film:** American Pie Presents Band Camp (2005) **1.05** Release the Hounds **2.05** Planet's Funniest Animals **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV3
1.30 The Return of Sherlock Holmes **3.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **5.55** Midsomer Murders **8.00** The Secret Life of Dogs **9.00** Caroline Quentin's National Parks **10.00** The Kindness of Strangers **11.35 Film:** Meet Joe Black (1998) **2.50** Secret Smile **4.05** On the Buses **4.35** Heartbeat **5.25** Movies Now **5.35** ITV3 Nightscreen
ITV4
12.45 Live Darts: The Masters. **5.00** Storage Wars **5.55** The Classic Car Show **7.00** Live Darts: The Masters. The quarter-finals. **11.00 Film:** Jackie Brown (1997) **2.10** Motorway Patrol **2.30** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
12.30 Couples Come Dine with Me **2.35 Film:** Sister Act (1992) **4.35** The Goldbergs **5.35** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **11.00** Rude Tube **12.05** The Inbetweeners **1.15** The IT Crowd **2.15** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.00** How I Met Your Mother **3.45** Hollyoaks
Film4
1.00 City of Ember (2008) **2.50** Big Business (1988) **4.45** Horton Hears a Who! (2008) **6.25** A Knight's Tale (2001) **9.00** The Two Faces of January (2014) **10.50** Law Abiding Citizen (2009)

PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Hannah's Law, Channel 5, 3.15pm
An orphaned girl grows up to be a bounty hunter under the tutelage of an expert gunslinger. She sets out on a personal mission to bring to justice the outlaws who murdered her parents, aided by a young Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday, but the search brings shocking secrets about her past to light. Western, starring Sara Canning. (2012)

TUESDAY
Mystery Woman: Game Time, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Amateur sleuth Samantha Kinsey manages to persuade a reclusive author to attend a book-signing event – but ends up having to solve his murder. A shady video-games designer seen near the body seems the likely culprit, but she is convinced he is innocent. Mystery, starring Kellie Martin. (2005)

WEDNESDAY
Truth and Lies, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Two former best friends and current enemies suspect each other of sending anonymous messages that threaten to expose their secrets. However, when they realise neither are behind it, the teenagers team up to investigate the source. Drama, starring Dina Meyer, Emily Tennant and Keenan Tracey. (2015)

Diamonds Are Forever, Friday, ITV, 11.10pm

THURSDAY
Garage Sale Mystery, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman becomes fascinated by a series of burglaries sweeping her home town. She notices some of the stolen items turning up in the garage sales she frequents, and decides to put her keen eye for a bargain to the task of identifying the criminals. Crime drama based on Suzi Weinert's novel, starring Lori Loughlin and Rick Ravanello. (2013)

FRIDAY
Diamonds Are Forever, ITV, 11.10pm
James Bond investigates a diamond-smuggling operation, and discovers that behind the scheme is his insidious arch-enemy Blofeld, who is planning to construct a devastating orbital doomsday weapon powered by the precious stones, which will force world powers to disarm and give him global domination. Spy adventure, starring Sean Connery. (1971)

A distressing new case awaits on the moors

TV is the new film. It's been said on many occasions, but it does seem to be true.

In the past, actors always aspired to get into movies, but not any more. In fact, these days, they're clamouring to be seen on the small screen, where the best scripts and juiciest characters seem to appear.

Brenda Blethyn has certainly enjoyed cinema success, bagging Oscar nominations for her performances in Secrets & Lies and Little Voice. But these days she's more likely to be seen solving crimes in Vera, which starts a new, four-part run this week.

It's the sixth series based on the best-selling novels by Ann Cleeves; the latest, The Moth Catcher, was released earlier this month, and an adaptation of it forms one of the forthcoming episodes.

"I attended the book launch of The Moth Catcher, which the third film is adapted from," says Blethyn, who is now fast friends with Cleeves. "I love it when Ann visits the set. I went to her house to enjoy a fabulous curry made by Tim, Ann's husband. It was absolutely delicious."

The actress claims she is thrilled by the show's success.

"You always hope the project you are working on is going to be successful," she explains. "I thought the character was very interesting, different, and worthy of a series but of course there is no guarantee. So naturally we were all delighted when the first series was commissioned. And thrilled each .me it has been re-commissioned.

"And it's always nice to hear from viewers across the world who enjoy Vera. There was a lovely review in the Sydney Morning Herald recently. They love her irascible nature and many admire the fact that she commands a position of authority over men! And that the episodes are so well written."

So, what can we expect from the latest run?

"More high quality drama. I love that ITV maintain the production values of the series. The art department is second to none. The stories in the first two episodes are particularly difficult for Vera to come to terms with. And as viewers have come to expect there are many great Northumberland locations."

Just don't ask her to work out whodunit before she's read the entire script: "Like most thrillers I'm kept guessing until the very end. Actually, neither does Vera 'guess' who the culprit is. I'm not an actor who goes to the last page first."

The series begins with an episode entitled Dark Road, in which Vera investigates the murder of 56-year-old grandmother Anne-Marie Richards, whose body has been discovered on the wild and desolate Northumberland moors.

She had a difficult relationship with her family and had recently returned to the area in a bid to reconcile with her two daughters – could one of her relatives have killed her, or will the culprit turn out to be somebody from her colourful past?

A 999 call made by Anne-Marie on the night of her murder, as well as the disturbed state of her cottage, suggests that the killer is close to home.

Brenda Blethyn stars in Vera, Sunday, ITV, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
The Undateables: Wedding Bells
Channel 4, 9pm
The fifth season of this dating show has been enthralling stuff, featuring a range of people who, while they may not have found lasting love, have had their confidence boosted by taking part. The final episode turns its attention to couples who are following in the footsteps of Tourette's sufferer and film-maker Brent Zillwood and model Challis Orme by getting married. Among those featured are Steve, whose Crouzon syndrome has always made him self-conscious, and he's now concerned that his looks may spoil his wedding to Vicky. Martin, meanwhile, suffers from a stammer that he worries may prevent him from proposing to his girlfriend, business coach Jessica. Finally Daniel, who is autistic, wonders if the girl he met at a speed dating event could be the woman of his dreams.

TUESDAY
Sugar Free Farm
ITV, 8pm
Now on day four of the sugar free diet, the celebrities are settling into the farm work but there is a tantrum over chickpeas in the pig field and a heated debate over dinner. Nutritionist Angelique Panagos tries to persuade them of the positives of a life without sugar, but even after a reality check at the hospital, Mark 'The Beast' Labbett is still reluctant to listen. Will the familiar faces find the going too tough as they do without sweet treats, or will they go the distance? Olivia Colman narrates.

WEDNESDAY
Camila's Kids Company: The Inside Story
BBC1, 9pm
For many years the charity Kids Company was held up as a success story for its work with young people, while charismatic founder Camila Batmanghelidjh was feted by celebrities and politicians alike. However, that began to change in 2015, when it emerged that the charity was on the edge of insolvency and that the government had demanded that Batmanghelidjh stand down as the CEO. Award-winning documentary director Lynn Alleway was following Batmanghelidjh when the story broke, and her documentary depicts the founder's fight to save her charity and resist the pressure to downsize. However, the film takes a dramatic turn when Kids Company is forced to close, leaving staff reeling, the community devastated – and everyone searching for answers.

Celebrity Big Brother: Live Final, Friday, Channel 5, 9pm

THURSDAY
Cats v Dogs: Which Is Best?
BBC2, 8pm
Cats and dogs are Britain's most popular pets – but which is best? If Harry Hill's TV Burp was in charge of answering that question, no doubt the word 'fight' would be mentioned. But rather than throwing them into a ring together, it will be left up to dog-lover Chris Packham and cat fan Liz Bonnin to work out the solution. In a two-part programme, they travel the country, gathering evidence as they go in an attempt to prove their personal cases. Along the way they meet animals with amazing talents and compare modern canines and felines with their ancient counterparts. They also tackle the ultimate test – Chris takes care of Liz's cat for a week, while she looks after his dog.

Keeping Up with the Khans
Channel 4, 9pm
New series. Documentary exploring the impact of immigration on Page Hall in Sheffield. Each edition focuses on a different community, beginning with the refugees, fleeing war to seek asylum in Britain and battling red tape as they try to start a new life. They include Haider from Lebanon, Libyan Ehab, Cameroonian political dissident Pride and Omar from Sudan, all living together in a house rented by the Home Office. They are all in limbo, unable to work or study while they wait to hear if their request for asylum has been granted.

FRIDAY
Celebrity Big Brother: Live Final
Channel 5, 9pm
It's been a strange few weeks in the Celebrity Big Brother House – arguably the oddest moment was the misunderstanding that led US reality star Tiffany Pollard to think that fellow housemate David Gest had died, rather than Angie Bowie's rock legend ex-husband – but after all those tasks and talking at cross purposes, the series is now at an end. Although some of the biggest characters (notably Bowie and Gest) left early due to ill health, we now get to find out who made it to the bitter end, and who the British public have chosen as their winner.

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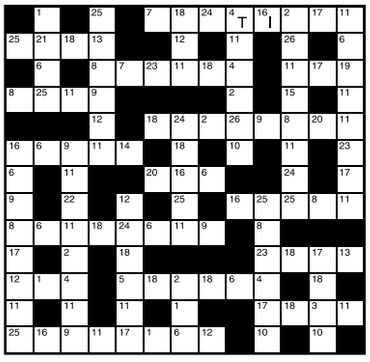
BRAIN GYM No.362

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



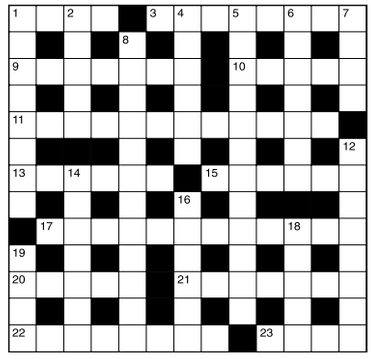
1	14
2	15
3	16 I
4 T	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
U	C	D	G	M	X	N	A	T	R	B	L	K
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
V	H	Y	F	P	Z	I	E	Q	J	S	W	O

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Support on the games field (4)
3. Where operations have dramatic results? (8)
9. The road comes to an end oddly decorated (7)
10. An estimate from a famous author? (5)
11. One can reckon 500, but it can be ignored (12)
13. Try hard in the last river race (6)
15. There is one voice in it (6)
17. Shop assistant in the secret service? (12)
20. Her branch is peaceful (5)
21. He's on trial for current 100 consumed (7)
22. Score 2 fewer (8)
23. In which creating a scene is only to be expected (4)

Down

1. Wave husk concoction? (8)
2. Annoyed a mongrel (5)
4. Concealment of corporal punishment? (6)
5. It is made knowingly, one assumes (12)
6. Grubs for sore lot (7)
7. Killed with rapid movement to one side (4)
8. Unsuitable to be in convent, that is with no head in it (12)
12. Idly tune in concert (8)
14. Cover overheads? (7)
16. Threaten workers with star performer (6)
18. A supporter of art-work (5)
19. Dull fellow who knows the drill? (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Select (4)
3. Magician (8)
9. A service-book (7)
10. Of the nose (5)
11. Meanwhile (2,3,7)
13. Transfix (6)
15. Address (6)
17. Compliment (12)
20. Pale (5)
21. Established (7)
22. Paternal (8)
23. Rush (4)

Down

1. Fruitful (8)
2. Military student (5)
4. Rectangular (6)
5. Scornful (12)
6. Reprieve (7)
7. Reign (4)
8. Information (12)
12. Protected (8)
14. Seer (7)
16. Legitimate (6)
18. Muddle (5)
19. Abandoned child (4)

Sudoku

		5	8					
6					1	8		
	7		9		6			3
	9				4	2	3	
8				3	9			1
	4	7	5				6	
	2		1				9	
9		1	2				8	7
				9	7	1		

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

8	2	6	4	9	1	3	5	7
1	4	3	8	5	7	6	2	9
5	7	9	3	6	2	8	4	1
7	9	5	1	3	4	2	8	6
2	8	4	9	7	6	5	1	3
6	3	1	5	2	8	7	9	4
9	5	2	6	1	3	4	7	8
3	1	8	7	4	5	9	6	2
4	6	7	2	8	9	1	3	5

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 6 Save our; 7 Souls; 9 Screw; 10 Capital; 12 Sleeping-car; 14 Seaside town; 18 Station; 19 Night; 21 Drill; 22 Heights. Down: 1 Watch; 2 Reveal; 3 Cue; 4 Coping; 5 Almanac; 8 Lariats; 11 Head for; 13 Letters; 15 Settle; 16 Wrings; 17 Chats; 20 Men. QUICK - Across: 6 Liberal; 7 Heave; 9 Vogue; 10 Dispose; 12 Degradation; 14 Parenthetic; 18 Contort; 19 Steed; 21 Piece; 22 Sadness. Down: 1 Minor; 2 Refuse; 3 Fad; 4 Despot; 5 Evasion; 8 Fiddler; 11 Writers; 13 Laconic; 15 Entice; 16 Intent; 17 Verse; 20 Ray.

Thinking space

Quiz

1. What is the Greek word for 'hot'?
2. What was the European Recovery Programme of 1948-52 better known as?
3. In which American state was Davy Crockett born?
4. What was the profession of Mrs. Patrick Campbell, who died in 1940?
5. On what part of a suit of armour would you find a beaver?
6. What is the dried outer covering of the nutmeg called?
7. What is Hans Lippershey credited with having invented in 1608?
8. Which jazz trumpeter recorded the album Bitches' Brew?
9. Who was Secretary General of the U.N. from 1972-81?
10. In which year was the Victoria Cross instituted?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 A soundproof cover fixed over a camera during shooting; 2 Italy and Austria; 3 15th; 4 Clio; 5 DK; 6 1889; 7 Fletcher; 8 Poland; 9 Asa Yoelson; 10 African antelope.

Niner: INTERVALS

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

3847 gives a weapon,
86239 gives another weapon,
3657129 gives a third weapon.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Dudley Chronicle Thursday, January 28, 2016

Enjoy a bit of well-deservedf 'me' time and relax in the pool

Mystery jets – a couple of the experience rooms

Stunning grounds – play tennis, cycle or just enjoy the beautiful gardens at Hoar Cross Hall

Chill out in one of the many relaxation areas

Bumpy road for this mum-to-be but for relaxation Spa beats them Hall

By Emily Bridgewater

I HAVEN'T slept for seven months and two days," said my friend candidly. They weren't the words I wanted to hear.

Six months pregnant, the realities of impending motherhood were becoming frighteningly apparent.

Mum to a baby and a toddler, my pal looked beaten; her no-sleep claim was probably on the conservative side so as not to really scare me. Well, I was petrified.

And so there really was only one place for us – a day's escape to Hoar Cross Hall Spa and Hotel for rest and relaxation.

The Staffordshire-based countryside retreat is one of the UK's most decorated spas offering everything from one-off treatments and half-day packages to extended weeklong stays (I wish).

The Jacobean-style Grade II-listed building completed in 1871, is set in immaculately manicured grounds and, on the day we visited, they basked in glorious autumnal sunshine.

We enjoyed a swift and friendly check-in at the day spa's reception then headed off to the clean, modern changing rooms.

"You do want to work out, don't you?" asked my friend apprehensively, half-heartedly unpacking a pair of trainers. Er, no, not really," I replied as my pal visibly sighed with relief.

"Why don't we go for a bike ride instead?" she suggested.

And so we bypassed the impressive gym facilities and headed outdoors to use the complimentary bikes, taking a route covering the extensive gardens and country lanes around the property. If, like us, the weather's on your side and you want to enjoy the enviable grounds, there are also tennis courts, boules and croquet. We agreed the hour-long cycle was a good way to work up an appetite for the sumptuous three-course lunch ahead.

Indulged

The spa's restaurant is first-class and we tucked into a table service meal of goat's cheese and balsamic onion tart followed by fresh ravioli with sun-dried tomatoes for me, and poached chicken and duchess potatoes for my friend.

There's a buffet selection of salads, breads and hot vegetables too, although we found the meal in itself to be enough. Besides, it allowed room for dessert and while Hoar Cross Hall is what used to be known as a 'health farm' in the days of the Green Goddess, there's still room for a bit of what you fancy. With that in mind, I ordered the chocolate cheesecake and cream, while my pal indulged in the lemon tart.

Exercise done and delicious food consumed, it was time to relax and so we changed into complimentary fluffy robes and slippers. Expert beauticians are on hand to attend to your every need, offering everything from facials, hair removal, massages and manicures to make-up lessons and haircuts in the salon. I was whisked off to one of the many private rooms for a pregnancy-friendly facial and massage. Starting to feel the pains and strains of mid-pregnancy, it was blissful.

We later opted for time in the extensive pool area however, more energetic guests may prefer to take advantage of one of the many fitness classes,We could only have one possible gripe . . . that we weren't able to stay for much longer.

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London is the natural home of theatre and the musical is king in the capital's world-famous West End. British musicals that prove a runaway success here, often go on to triumph on Broadway and around the globe. The winning combination of engaging writing, captivating stage design and commanding performance has enabled London theatres to achieve box office smashes time and time again.

Omega Holidays offer a superb portfolio of theatre breaks, managing the whole show package which includes travel, either by coach or rail, four-star accommodation and various price bands for each show. Make your own way breaks are also available to book.

Rail inclusive breaks – Two days

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Catch the Theatre Express and enjoy a super two-day weekend break in the capital.

There's a selection of London hotels to choose from (supplements may apply) and rail travel is standard class with the option to upgrade. Departs Saturday from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton, returning on the Sunday.

The ticket is for a Saturday evening performance.

Rail inclusive breaks – Three days

Theatre Showstopper from £239.95

This popular theatre package to the West End departs from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton on the Friday returning on Sunday.

Standard class travel is included with the option to upgrade, plus two nights stay at a four-star London hotel (supplements may apply).

Includes a top priced ticket for a Friday evening performance.

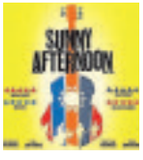
Coach inclusive breaks – Two days

Saturday Night from £149.95

Theatre Weekend with Dinner from £159.95

For the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option, see the matinee performance before heading to the hotel for an evening meal. The Saturday Night option includes a ticket for the evening performance (meal not included).

Both breaks include a standard priced theatre ticket with the option to upgrade plus an overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel.



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Property

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Key tips when house hunting

BUYING a home– particularly your first – is likely to be the biggest purchase you will ever make, so ensuring you ask the right questions when viewing a property is essential.

The National Assocation of Estate Agents – the NAEA – can help. It is the UK's leading professional body for estate agency personnel, being part of a group representing 13,000 members who practice across all aspects of property services both in the UK and overseas.

And the NAEA has five key tips to remember when viewing a property:

Spend some time thinking about what it is you want from your new home. What kind of property will suit your lifestyle? What location is most desirable and affordable? Do you want a garden? How many bedrooms do you need? Do you want a new or old property? Taking the time to identify what is important to you will save you time in your property search.

Preparation is key. Be ready with a list of questions you want to ask the vendor and the estate agent. For example asking how long the house has been on the market may give you a clue to any potential problems with the property. You might also need to ask; what fixtures and fitting will be left? What are the neighbours like? Why the vendor is moving? What are the parking arrangements? How much does the property cost to run? In order to keep each property you view clear in your mind it is best to take notes along the way.

Be as observant. Look for any potential problems and costs such as dysfunctional guttering, cracks in the interior and exterior walls or brown stains on the ceiling that may indicate a leaky roof for example.

Try to visualise yourself living there. Ignore the décor as much as you can and try to think about whether your furniture will fit into the house and how it will look with your style applied to it. View the property in daylight and be sure to check out the area at other times of the day: a quiet road might be manic during rush hour and a desirable neighbourhood may look different at night.

Be polite but don't feel uncomfortable looking around a house, it is a big investment to make, so it pays to be a little nosey.

Getting the home of your dreams may seem difficult, but the process can be simplified by carrying out careful research of the market. The very first thing any modern house hunter should do is to log onto the internet where a wealth of information about the local housing market can be found. You should look at the property in local newspapers where you are interested in living. This will give you a good idea of house prices in the area.

Next, take a drive around the areas you are considering. Look at the types of properties that are around there. Take a note of what facilities are nearby and how close any train or bus routes are. Work out how long your commute might be. Go for a walk around any areas which you like and look out for any 'For Sale' signs, and which estate agents they belong to.

After that, visit the nearest town and have a good look in the estate agents' windows.

Take your time to work out a full picture of the market in the area. When you have a mortgage in principle in place, it is then the time to pay a visit or make a phone call to the agent who you think has the strongest presence in the market for the type of home you are looking for.

Arm yourself with any questions which you cannot answer yourself. Tell the estate agent your guide price range, but be flexible – you can look at houses above your budget in a slowing market, as there may be opportunity for negotiation.

Keep in mind the prime principle of property buying: location, location, location. Many argue that a smaller property in a better location will hold its value better and have a stronger resale value, than a larger home in a less desirable area.

Once you have a clear understanding of the market and what it can offer, you will be in a better position to act quickly when your estate agent shows you the right property. You will also be able to better express to the estate agent exactly what you are looking for, which will save time all round.

Remember, choosing a member of the NAEA offers higher standards, protection and a complaints procedure for you. You can search for NAEA members at http://www.naea.co.uk/find-agent/

Brave the winter chill to find a great deal

TRADITIONALLY house buying peaks in the spring but increasingly savvy movers are realising the potential advantages to buying or selling a property in the winter months.

But be cautious: whilst there are good deals to be had it is also important to consider possible pitfalls, as mistakes could be expensive as well as delaying your move.

Remember when arranging viewings, that days are shorter so you will need to visit during the day or at the weekend in order to properly view a house. Winter reveals the true condition of the property as the exterior is bare, enabling you to check the façade for cracks and damp. Inspect the guttering for blockages it might be a good idea to ask to see the loft, so you can ensure there are no roof holes or leakages.

There are fewer houses for sale in the winter but also fewer buyers which means less competition for both parties. How many times did you fall in love with a property during the summer months only to have it snatched away by another buyer? If you are selling, have you found that you have lost buyers who have been tempted by other properties?

Winter sellers tend to need to move so may be willing to accept a deal to enable a quicker exchange. The winter market can often bring a greater sense of commitment from both sides to complete the sale, as people tend to make life changing decisions in the New Year. Use this to your advantage. Also, you may find better mortgage deals as lenders try and attract off-peak customers. Winter moving generally runs more smoothly as lenders and estate agents have fewer customers to process so are able to dedicate more time to you.

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New

DUDLEY, Yarner Close, Milking Bank

ENVIABLY SITUATED at head of cul-de-sac with delightful rear garden! Meticulously maintained, Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached residence briefly comprising; porch, hall, store, 16'4" lounge, dining room, conservatory, refitted breakfast kitchen with various integrated appliances, utility room, cloaks. Principal bedroom with built in wardrobes & shower room en suite, three further generous bedrooms (two with wardrobes), bathroom. Garage, landscaped garden with patio & decking. EPC: T.B.A. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £275,000

SEDGLEY, Larch Grove

SIGNIFICANTLY ENLARGED & reconfigured, Freehold, gas centrally heated, primarily double glazed detached family home comprising; entrance vestibule, hallway, cloaks, 21'4" lounge, upgraded/refitted dining kitchen, CONSERVATORY, 21' sitting room with extensive 18"' storage annexe beyond (further potential?). Four bedrooms (bedroom one with shower room en suite), bathroom. Block paved foregarden with 'large detached garage' secluded rear garden. EPC:C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £270,000

Brierley Hill, Willow Rise

BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED, EXTENDED, BEDROOM DETACHED FAMILY HOME includes both GAS CENTRAL HEATING AND DOUBLE GLAZING to comprise: Hall, Guests Cloakroom, Sitting Room, EXTENDED DINING ROOM, Shaker Style Kitchen, Utility, Four Bedrooms, LUXURY ENSUITE, Re-Appointed House Bathroom. Drive, Garage and Rear Garden. EPC D

£269,950

SEDGLEY, Sunningdale Road, Northway

ENVIABLE LOCATION! Backing onto fields and with PANORAMIC DISTANT VIEWS a conscientiously maintained, uPVC double glazed, gas centrally heated detached with tremendous potential in favoured 'backwater' location. Accommodation includes entrance porch, reception hall, through living/dining room, kitchen, utility room. Three bedrooms, bathroom, generous garage, gardens. EPC: E. SEDGLEY

New price **WAS £209,950, NOW £204,500**

WOODSETTON, Eton Close

SPACIOUS BEDROOMS! Situated at head of cul de sac; conscientiously maintained, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached enjoying open aspect to rear & additional parking comprising; hall, cloakroom, store, 17ft lounge, dining room with patio doors through to a CONSERVATORY, kitchen. FOUR BEDROOMS (one with fitted units & shower room en suite), bathroom. Gated drive, carport, garage, garden. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £190,000

UPPER GORNAL, Pale Street

SPACIOUS, NEW BUILD, gas centrally heated, double glazed dormer style detached with flexible room arrangements. Conveniently situated, the accommodation comprises; hall, stylish BATHROOM, double bedroom, magnificent 'hub of the house' 19 ft living/dining room/kitchen. To first floor is a large 20'7" principal bedroom with shower room en suite.Parking, gardens, distant views. EPC: SAP: B. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £189,950

LOWER GORNAL, Sandstone Close

SCANDANAVIAN STYLE. Gas centrally heated, double glazed detached family home constructed to first quality specification & in exemplary order. Designed to match adjacent property with minimal energy/running costs the accommodation includes; hall, cloakroom, lounge, 19ft 'hub of the house' dining kitchen, garden room. Three bedrooms, bathroom. garden, GARAGE (rear), additional parking. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

New price **WAS £189,950, NOW £185,950**

TIPTON, Woodcroft Avenue

A well-proportioned, traditional detached residence situated in a popular area of Tipton a benefitting from, UPVC double glazing, gas central heating, porch, entrance hall, living room, L-shaped lounge-diner, good-sized kitchen, ground-floor bathroom, TWO BEDROOMS, shower room, integral garage, enclosed rear garden, driveway and garden to front. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: E. SEDGLEY

Offers around £174,950

WOODSETTON, Flavell Street

A well presented, extended traditional semi-detached property situated in sought after area of Woodsetton. This good size family home benefits from entrance hall, living room, dining room, kitchen. THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, double glazing and central heating, enclosed rear garden and driveway to front. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £145,000

New

SEDGLEY, Corve View, Northway

EXCEPTIONALLY STYLISH, tremendously upgraded, gas centrally heated & UPVC double glazed semi detached with PANORAMIC DISTANT VIEWS in quiet cul de sac. 'Transformed' by present vendors over the years the property comprises; lounge, refitted breakfast kitchen with fine range of 'birch' effect units. TWO DOUBLE BEDROOMS, bathroom with contemporary white suite, SUBSTANTIAL GARAGE, sheltered 'low maintenance' garden. EPC: TBC. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £140,000

LOWER GORNAL, Grafton Gardens, Straits

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Enviably situated in cul-de-sac just off The Straits within walking distance of the village & backing on to country park at rear; a significantly improved, Freehold, gas centrally heated & double glazed intermediate "family home". briefly comprising; hallway, spacious living/dining room, rear hallway with store, kitchen. Three generous bedrooms, refitted bathroom with white suite. Garage, sheltered garden abutting on to woodland. EPC: E. SEDGLEY

Fixed Price of £140,000

New

QUARRY BANK, Victoria Road

This LUXURIOUS NEW BUILD HOME comprises: Hall, Guests Cloakroom, CONTEMPORARY KITCHEN, Stylish lounge, TWO LARGE FIRST FLOOR BEDROOMS, Wonderful Loft Space, Well Appointed House Bathroom, Substantial Rear Garden. NO UPWARD CHAIN! EPC: G

£139,950

New

PENSNETT, Tansey Green Road

Pleasantly located within this established address, enjoying fantastic open rear views over attractive countryside, this GENEROUS SEMI DETACHED FAMILY HOUSE offers a spacious THREE BEDROOM layout, plus a good sized driveway and a large level garden. EPC TBA

£134,950

COSELEY, Andersleigh Drive

Outstanding, EXTENDED, gas centrally heated, double glazed end "starter home" with panoramic distant views briefly comprising; entrance hallway, lounge, refitted kitchen with a fine range of beech effect units, sitting room/snug.Two bedrooms, bathroom. Potential garage space, landscaped garden EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers around £120,000

New

PENSNETT, Heydon Road

This ATTRACTIVELY PRESENTED AND TRADITIONAL, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises: Porch, Hall, Lovely Sitting Room, CONTEMPORARY BREAKFAST KITCHEN, THREE BEDROOMS, White Suite Family Bathroom, PLEASANT FRONT & REAR GARDENS. NO UPWARD CHAIN! EPC: D

£117,995

LANESFIELD, Ward Grove

A delightfully presented and well maintained bungalow which is conveniently situated in the Lanesfield area and benefits from upvc double glazing, gas central heating, TWO bedrooms, living room, fitted kitchen, shower room, good-sized enclosed rear garden off road parking. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC:D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £114,950

GORNAL WOOD, Brook Street

Beautifully presented, traditional, uPVC double glazed, gas centrally heated, TWO BEDROOM mid-terraced property set in the popular, Gornal Wood. This fabulous home benefits from well-presented living room, attractive breakfast-kitchen, utility area, stunning Victorian style bathroom, good-sized master bedroom, stunning cottage style enclosed rear garden. Viewing Essential to appreciate what this property has to offer. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £114,950

QUARRY BANK, Watchman Avenue

This THREE BEDROOM HOME now requires some updating and modernisation and comprises: Porch, Hall, Two Reception Rooms, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Two Bathrooms, Driveway & Rear Gardens. EPC E

£104,950

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New

WALL HEATH, Beachcroft Road

With an OUTDOOR HEATED SWIMMING POOL, this EXTENDED & EXPENSIVELY IMPROVED, SEMI-DETACHED HOME is well placed. Including a LARGE CONSERVATORY and THREE FIRST FLOOR BEDROOMS. Block paved driveway, GARAGE and an attractive rear garden. EPC D

£244,950

New

KINGSWINFORD, Compton Grove

A VERY LARGE & EXTENDED SEMI DETACHED FAMILY HOME, superbly located for village shops and schools, requiring some updating to further enhance the INCREDIBLY SPACIOUS layout, including 3 VERY LARGE BEDROOMS. With FULL WIDTH DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and a private rear garden. EPC E

No upward chain

Guide Price £224,950

SEDGLEY, Wolverhampton Road

EDWARDIAN ELEGANCE! SPACIOUS, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached of character retaining many fine period features comprising; hall, lounge, dining room, family room, kitchen, utility, cloakroom. Three double bedrooms (principal bedroom with shower room en suite), bathroom. VAST ROOF SPACE. Gardens, Vehicular access to EXTENSIVE PARKING. EPC:E. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £200,000

LOWER GORNAL, Summer Lane

Delightful, conscientiously maintained, Freehold, gas centrally heated & primarily double glazed DETACHED with further potential and NO UPWARD CHAIN set in popular convenient district comprising: hall, transverse lounge, refitted breakfast kitchen with a range of 'birch' finish units & integrated appliances. Three generous bedrooms (bedroom with shower cubicle en suite), bathroom, integral 19ft garage, neat garden. EPC Rating D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £165,000

New

SEDGLEY, Turls Hill Road

EXTENDED Edwardian gas centrally heated, recently double glazed & recently re-roofed semi-detached conveniently situated within walking distance of all the Sedgley amenities and also open fields comprising; Hall, Sitting Room, Dining Room,Conservatory. Upgraded kitchen. THREE bedrooms, bathroom. Parking to front, former garage, secluded garden. EPC: T.B.A. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £155,000

SEDGLEY, Dormston Drive

Situated within walking distance of Bull Ring; a gas radiator centrally heated, uPVC double glazed detached comprising; hallway, cloaks, 24'5" through living/dining room, kitchen. Three bedrooms, bathroom. block paving, garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers around £154,950

SEDGLEY, Moden Hill

EXCITING OPPORTUNITY! Full planning consent secured to construct a magnificent detached split level family home.The plot slops from East to West and it enjoys an unrivalled ELEVATED POSITION with magnificent panoramic DISTANT VIEWS to the West. Plans, drawings and other calculations are all for inspection at Sedgley Office. Viewing on site strictly by appointment.

Offers based on £150,000

SEDGLEY, Northway

TREMENDOUS VALUE. Superb, comparatively spacious, gas centrally heated UPVC double glazed semi detached presented in exemplary order upon favoured development comprising; entrance hallway, walk in store (with potential) 21'4" through living/dining room, refitted kitchen with a fine range of units, inner vestibule with further store, three generous bedrooms (one with fitted units), shower room (former bathroom). Garage, garden. EPC C. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £149,950

New

PENSNETT, Clyde Mews

This SPACIOUS & TRADITIONAL, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises: Hall, TWO RECEPTION ROOMS, White Gloss Kitchen, Conservatory with doors opening to REAR GARDEN, THREE GENEROUS FIRST FLOOR BEDROOMS, Modern Shower Room, Large Driveway, Garage EPC: D

£129,950

LOWER GORNAL, Redstone Way

A stylish, comparatively spacious, gas centrally heated & uPVC double glazed intermediate "starter home" in quiet cul-de-sac in favoured/convenient district. Accommodation includes; 17'3" (max.) lounge, transverse breakfast kitchen with various integrated appliances, rear vestibule, fitted cloakroom. TWO DOUBLE BEDROOMS, bathroom with white suite. Sheltered rear garden landscaped to ensure low maintenance & allocated parking. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £129,950

New

PENSNETT, Bryce Road

This WELL PRESENTED, LARGE, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises: Hall, Sitting Room, Contemporary Breakfast Kitchen, Guests Cloakroom, DELIGHTFUL CONSERVATORY, THREE BEDROOMS, Modern White Suite Bathroom, Large Driveway, Substantial Garden. EPC D

£125,000

New

COSELEY, Evergreen Close, Hurst Hill

Modern intermediate property which is an ideal first time buyers home and is situated in a popular cul-de-sac location in Coseley. Its benefits from living room, kitchen-diner, sun room, TWO BEDROOMS, refitted shower room, double glazing and gas central heating with enclosed rear garden and parking to front. This property is offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: T.B.A. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £124,950

LOWER GORNAL, Brook Street

A immaculately presented traditional detached property located in the extremely popular area of Lower Gornal, Dudley. This superb started home benefits from living room, dining room, kitchen-diner, TWO BEDROOMS, double glazing and gas central heating, enclosed rear garden. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: T.B.A.SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £124,950

New

BROCKMOOR, Briars Close

This DELIGHTFUL & VERY WELL PRESENTED, TWO BEDROOM PROPERTY would make a LOVELY FIRST HOME and comprises: Porch, Pleasant Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Two First Floor Bedrooms, Well Appointed Bathroom, Off Road Parking & Pretty Rear Garden. EPC: E

£99,950

New

COSELEY, Brooklyn Grove

Good sized semi detached residence situated in the popular area of Coseley. This good sized family home benefits from entrance hallway, living room, dining room, re-fitted kitchen, guest W/C, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, gas central heating, double glazing, enclosed rear garden, driveway and garden to front. EPC: T.B.A. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £99,950

DUDLEY, Occupation Street

Well maintained end of terraced property which offers potential and is an ideal starter home. It is situated in the sought after area of Dudley and benefits from upvc double glazing, gas central heating, TWO DOUBLE BEDROOMS, through-lounge, kitchen, fitted shower room, enclosed rear garden, driveway to front and detached garage. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC:D. SEDGLEY

WAS £107,950, NOW £99,950

New

GORNAL, Hill Street

This WELL PRESENTED, FIRST FLOOR FLAT comprises: Front Door with stair case leading to a LANDING which provides approaches too: Lovely Breakfast Kitchen, Lounge, Double Bedroom, Bathroom, Block Paved Parking & Communal Garden. EPC: C

£79,950

TIPTON, Bonneville Close

Superb, modern ground floor apartment which comprises of upvc double glazing, gas central heating and secure entrance doors, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, TWO BEDROOMS, bathroom, allocated parking and NO UPWARD CHAIN.EPC Rating C. SEDGLEY

PRICE: £69,950

www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk

Detached family home has been refurbished

AN EXTENDED detached four-bedroomed family home, 17 Maple Close, Kinver, has been refurbished to high standards with excellent attention to detail.

It is for sale through The Property Shop at £350,000. This spacious accommodation comprises an entrance hall, a guest WC, a lounge leads through to the open plan kitchen and dining room complete with contemporary light-wood effect units, a stylish island unit, integrated appliances and bi-folding doors across the full width of the room.

There is also a utility room, first floor landing, three double bedrooms with fitted wardrobes and a modern bathroom. On the top floor is the master suite with built-in storage and an en suite shower room.

Contact The Property Shop on (01384) 444645 or www.thepropertyshop.co.uk

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30 WREN STREET, WOODSETTON — O/A £230,000
- Well maintained detached family home
- Four bedroomed spacious accommodation
- Well fitted kitchen and bathroom with separate shower cubicle
- Through lounge & separate dining room
- SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING E

ST JAMES STREET LOWER GORNAL — £189,950
- Five new build detached bungalows with two bedrooms
- Traditionally built to a high standard with two parking spaces per plot
- Fully fitted kitchen with breakfast bar, fully fitted family bathroom
- Spacious living/dining room with french window opening onto landscaped garden
- High levels of insulation and choice of fitted carpets
- SEDGLEY OFFICE-PREDICTED EPC TBC

41 ROPER WAY — O/A £199,950
WOODSETTON
- Detached house
- Three bedrooms
- Attractively presented
- Head of a cul de sac
- SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING D

REDUCED

75 NORTHWAY, SEDGLEY — £179,950
- Well presented link detached house
- Three bedrooms, through lounge & dining room
- Well proportioned accommodation with gas central heating
- Situated on the popular Northway housing estate
- SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING E

3 HARVINGTON ROAD, COSELEY — O/O £169,950
- Detached house with three bedrooms
- Two reception rooms, extended dining room, utility
- Well maintained and attractively presented accommodation
- Occupying a pleasant and convenient location
- SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING E

15 DAFFODIL CLOSE — £132,950
SEDGLEY
- Modern semi detached
- Three bedrooms
- 'L'shaped lounge
- Dining kitchen
- SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING D

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34 LAWNSWOOD ROAD, LOWER GORNAL — £147,500
- Semi detached house with altered accommodation
- Three bedrooms, bedroom two with separate w.c.
- 'L' shaped lounge/dining room with separate sitting/playroom
- Situated in a popular cul de sac location within reach of Gornal Village
- SEDGLEY OFFICE - EPC RATING TBC

LAND FRONTING FIRS STREET — £110,000
DUDLEY
- Development Site
- Subject to Local Authority consent
- Rectangular area of land
- Approximately 0.134 acres
- SEDGLEY OFFICE

32 CROSS LANE — £104,950
SEDGLEY
- Semi detached house
- Three bedrooms
- Upvc double glazing
- In need of cosmetic updating
- SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING F

15 DUNOON DRIVE — £49,950
WOLVERHAMPTON
- Modern coach house apartment
- Two bedrooms
- Open plan lounge & kitchen
- Parking space, communal grounds
- SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING C

Sedgley Office
01902 885894

Dudley Office
01384 459999

wakeman-online.com

1930s detached house with original features

A 1930s detached house with lots of character and original features in Dudley Road, Sedgley, comes with a large rear garden and a self-contained games room.

It is for sale through Trinity Property at £275,000.

The accommodation comprises of entrance hall, three reception rooms including a lounge with a feature fireplace, large modern fitted kitchen, a storage cupboard, WC and garage, a first floor with five bedrooms, en suite and a large family bathroom.

Contact Trinity Property (01384) 213395 or at www.trinityproperty.net

www.bakersproperty.co.uk

GORNAL
THORNLEIGH

Modern detached in a popular residential area a short distance from the village centre and in immaculate order throughout. Detached, Block paved drive, Garage, Reception hall, Lounge Formal dining area Fully fitted kitchen, Cloakroom Three bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas C/htg/, double glazed, Private landscaped gardens.

OFFERS BASED ON : £209,950

THE STRAITS
HIGH ARCAL ROAD

Extended individual design bungalow, standing on a sizeable elevated plot in a sought after residential area. Reception hall, lounge, formal dining/study, breakfast kitchen, three bedrooms, bathroom, shower room/cloaks, garage, gas C/htg, double glazed, landscaped gardens, freehold, vacant possession.

OFFERS BASED ON : £244,950

GORNAL
BROOKDALE

Immaculate semi detached property refurbished to a high specification and within walking distance of the village centre. Luxury accommodation comprises-DRIVE AND PARKING TO RECEPTION HALL ENTRANCE-LOUNGE-FORMAL DINING AREA-FITTED KITCHEN-INTEGRATED APPLIANCES-THREE BEDROOMS-FITTED FURNITURE TO MASTER-BATHROOM-GAS C/HTG/DOUBLE GLAZED-GARDENS-CEDARWOOD GARDEN ROOM.

OFFERS BASED ON : £129,950

DUDLEY
SHREWSBURY PLACE

Immaculate semi-detached property just two years old situated on the popular Friars Gate development. Accommodation comprises: Reception hall, lounge, fitted breakfast kitchen, integrated appliances, two bedrooms, bathroom, gas C/Htg, double glazed, landscaped, private gardens, block paved drive and parking. NHBC Guarantee.

OFFERS BASED ON : £119,950

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WOMBOURNE

Hazel Grove,

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- Tremendous potential
- Garage and driveway
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- Majority Upvc double glazed
- VIEWING RECOMMENDED
- EPC Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £205,000

DUDLEY

Attingham Drive,

- A Modern TOWN HOUSE
- Set over three storey's
- Contemporary & spacious
- Lounge & modern Kitchen
- FOUR double bedrooms
- Three En-suites
- Allocated parking
- EPC Rating - C

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £177,500

COSELEY

Clifton Street,

- * A traditional DETACHED
- * Open plan lounge/dining
- * Modern Kitchen
- * Three good size bedrooms
- * An excellent size bathroom
- * Rear gardens & garage
- * Off road parking
- * EPC Rating - E

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £173,950

LOWER GORNAL

Grafton Gardens, The Straits

- A well presented semi
- Favoured 'Straits' address
- Open plan accommodation
- Garage conversion
- THREE bedrooms
- A beautiful private garden
- Ideal family home
- EPC Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £167,500

DUDLEY

Bradfield Way,

- A MODERN townhouse property
- Approximately 3/4 years old
- Under NHBC guarantee
- Contemporary breakfast kitchen
- THREE bedrooms
- Well maintained rear garden
- IDEAL FIRST TIME BUY
- EPC Rating - B

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £139,950

COSELEY

Eliot Croft,

- An EXTENDED semi
- Quiet cul-de-cac in Coseley
- Having 2 reception rooms
- THREE bedrooms
- House bathroom
- Driveway parking
- IDEAL FIRST TIME BUY
- EPC Rating - C

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £136,500

COSELEY

Skidmore Road,

- * BRAND NEW development
- * Two bedrooms
- * Luxury kitchen & bathroom
- * Allocated parking
- * Rear gardens
- * Ideal first time buy
- * Flexible mortgages available
- * EPC rating- B

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £124,950

COSELEY

Skidmore Road,

- A traditional semi-detached
- Spacious family home
- Cul-de-sac location
- Three bedrooms
- Kitchen and dining room
- LARGE rear garden
- NO UPWARD CHAIN
- EPC Rating - E

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £120,000

RIPLEY GROVE, UPPER GORNAL

St. James Court,

- A ground floor APARTMENT
- Centrally located for Sedgley and Gornal
- Only 5 years old (NHBC Guarantee)
- Open plan modern lounge/kitchen
- TWO bedrooms
- One car parking space
- Communal gardens
- Secure entry system
- Ideal first time buy
- EPC Rating - B

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £94,950

TIPTON

Powis Avenue,

- * A very well presented terrace property
- * Prominent for amenities of Tipton
- * Spacious internal accommodation
- * Lounge, kitchen & downstairs wc
- * THREE bedrooms
- * Well maintained rear gardens
- * Driveway parking
- * IDEA FIRST TIME BUY
- * EPC Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £95,950

COSELEY

Vicarage Road,

- A well presented semi-detached
- IDEAL FIRST TIME BUY
- Prominent location in Roseville Village
- Open plan kitchen/diner
- TWO goof size bedrooms
- Pleasant rear garden
- Driveway parking
- Gas central heating and double glazing
- NO UPWARD CHAIN
- EPC Rating - E

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £94,950

COSELEY

Langley Avenue,

- A well presented end of terrace
- Ideal for a first time buyer
- Open plan modern dining kitchen
- TWO double bedrooms
- Contemporary bathroom
- Tidy rear garden
- Off road parking to the front
- Quiet cul-de-sac location
- EPC Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £93,500

ETTINGSHALL PARK

Camberley Crescent,

- An impressive detached
- 3 DOUBLE bedrooms
- Fabulous modern bathroom
- Extended feature kitchen
- Extensive rear gardens
- Lounge and dining room
- Garage & driveway
- EPC Rating - E

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £224,950

SEDGLEY

Viewfield Crescent,

- A Beautifully presented Bungalow
- OPEN ASPECT VIEWS
- Large lounge with dining area
- Two DOUBLE bedrooms
- Bathroom with 'white' suite
- Upvc double glazed windows
- Block paved drive
- NO UPWARD CHAIN
- EPC Rating - C
- Offers Invited

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £209,950

COSELEY

Upper Ettingshall Road,

- A DETACHED dormer bungalow
- Popular residential area
- In need of some modernisation
- THREE BEDROOMS
- Ensuite and house bathroom
- Fully Upvc double glazed,
- A garage and driveway
- EPC Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £169,500

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DUDLEY

Badminton Close, Milking Bank

- A DETACHED in cul-de-sac
- Popular Milking Bank Estate
- Modern dining kitchen
- THREE bedrooms
- Conservatory
- Corner plot with extra land
- Low maintenance garden
- Garage and driveway
- EPC Rating - C

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £184,950

DUDLEY

Longfellow Road, Lower Gornal

- A well presented semi-detached home
- 'Poets corner' of The Straits
- THREE bedrooms
- Bathroom with separate shower cubicle
- Garage, partly converted into an office
- Landscaped tired gardens to the rear
- EPC Rating - D

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £174,950

BILSTON

Lilian Grove,

- * A beautifully presented semi-detached
- * Tastefully decorated throughout
- * THREE bedrooms
- * Modern dining kitchen
- * Downstairs WC and conservatory
- * Three parking spaces
- * Well maintained rear garden
- * An ideal first time buy
- * EPC Rating - D

£134,950

Jeep is plugging the gap

By Graham Breeze

The Renegade is probably Jeep's bravest move yet as the company goes all out to tackle a crowded small SUV sector.

And size is the first thing you notice about the Renegade, because it's much smaller than anything Jeep has made before, with bosses recognising a gap for a true four-wheel drive vehicle in the busy crossover market.

There's an immediate similarity to Skoda's Yeti thanks to the boxy shape but the Renegade is chunkier, is made of stronger stuff and is clearly recognisable as a Jeep with its circular headlights and famous grille.

Renegade is the first Fiat Chrysler Automobiles car to be jointly developed by Italian and American engineers and the first Jeep to be built in Europe but sold in the USA. It is also the first small SUV to feature rear axle disconnect.

The Renegade will stand out in any company but for those who see personalisation as a key option it is available in 11 colours with six wheel designs. There are six powertrain combinations, two MultiAir II petrol engines, a pair of MultiJet II turbo diesels and a 1.6-litre eTorque petrol.

There are also five and six-speed manual gearboxes, the Dual Dry Clutch Transmission and the nine-speed automatic gearbox. Available with two or four-wheel drive the Renegade boasts two new, advanced 4x4 systems: Jeep Active Drive and Jeep Active Drive Low.

On test was the 2.0 Multijet Longitude 140hp 6-speed manual model with a 4x4 system supplying just the right amount of torque for any driving situation and one of four models in the range.

The rear axle disconnect system seamlessly switches between two and four-wheel-drive to guarantee traction and keep running costs to a minimum.

There's also a choice of driving settings to suit individual preferences.

The test model had a surprising top speed of 113mph and got me to 62mph in 9.5seconds while averaging 55.4mpg on the combined cycle. For such a beast it was surprising that CO2 emission levels were only 134 g/km.

Comforting

You expect a Jeep to sound a bit on the noisy side and the Renegade didn't disappoint, and there's something comforting about the roar of the engine on this model which means you are prepared to put up with the sound.

For an on-the-road price of £23,395 you can expect 17" aluminium wheels, LED lighting, roof rails, body coloured door mirrors and handles, trailer sway damping, All speed traction control, a security alarm and a stop/start system.

The test car came with a special paint job, spare tyre, parking sensors, panoramic sunroof, heated front seats and steering wheel and a function pack which included keyless entry, height adjustable cargo floor, under seat storage and electrically folding door mirrors - all pushing the price up to £26,195.

You could also add an array of advanced safety features including Forward Collision Warning Plus with Crash Mitigation which automatically prevents or reduces the impact in low-speed shunts; ParkSense Parallel and Perpendicular Park Assist that automatically parks the car; LaneSenseTM Lane Departure Warning Plus; and Adaptive Cruise Control.

The Renegade leaves the rest of the class in its trail once you step inside. The high seating position means there's great vision all-round and if I was buying one the panoramic sunroof would be a must at £1,100 extra.

The Renegade has Jeep's Uconnect system which provides an interface between vehicle occupants and communication, entertainment and 5" navigation touchscreen with voice control. Impressively the Uconnect system enables handsfree calls from Bluetooth phones while compatible smartphones can send from a list of 18 pre-defined text messages. The system also announces the receipt of a message, identifies the sender and 'reads' the message aloud.

Music can be streamed wirelessly while MP3 players can be connected to the premium media hub via the standard auxiliary jack or USB port and charged. The AM/FM DAB radio can be controlled by voice commands.

The Renegade also has a full-colour instrument cluster which sits in front of the driver, displaying information using a combination of graphics and text. The sort of impressive technology you don't normally associate with Jeep.

It's a brave step by Jeep to drop a vehicle into the SUV sector and the company is likely to attract a lot of buyers unable to afford to get into the big four-wheel-drive market.

Jeep sales are booming in America and Europe with Renegade popular in Italy, France and Austria as has picked up awards in the UK, Italy, France and Spain.

Renegade has the looks and the performance to be a big player in the SUV sector.

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Kia deposit contribution	£500.00	One final payment (GFV)	£3,731.50
Amount of credit	£8,345.00	Total amount payable	£8,845.00
Total charge for credit	£0	Duration of agreement (months)	25
Representative	0% APR	Selected annual mileage	6,000
		Excess mileage charge	14.9p per mile

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Kia deposit contribution	£1,250.00	Total amount payable	£31,737.91
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Works hard and is loyal companion

By Matt Kimberley

It's the most important Vauxhall arriving this year. Has the compact hatch got the magic to take on its key rivals?

The Astra is an underrated, but evergreen compact family hatch, as happy taking the kids on a short break away as it is cutting a path through the city. There's no radical departure for 2016, although the sharp-eyed will notice a nip here and a tuck there.

There's an excellent new colour touch-screen that's standard across the range. It gives the whole product a lift and helps it make a better first impression.

It's a sharp-looking thing, if a bit on the conservative side. Being built in Britain won't do its appeal this side of Dover any harm, either. Whichever model you choose, you end up with a pleasantly stylish and definitely inoffensive car. You'll never object to having it on your drive.

It's quite sensitive to trim grades, though, so whereas the fantastic top-spec cars with all the interior trimmings look like they've come straight from the top drawer, the fragile rubberised handbrake grip and cheap-looking plastics on the low-end versions leave a lot to be desired and can start to look tatty very quickly.

Happy

There's a handy boot at the back, more than big enough for most tasks, but if you're toting babies, you'll struggle to get much more than a chunky pushchair into it without putting the conveniently split rear seats down.

Front seaters will be happy enough, especially with the uncommonly well-shaped seat backs that give superb lumbar support. The glove box is shed-spacious but the door pocket shapes and cupholder designs could be better thought out.

Under the bonnet there is a 1.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine. It can't make the Astra a rocket ship, but if you're gentle, you'll see fuel economy you'd struggle to better in an eco-diesel. I found it no problem to hover around 60mpg in relatively traffic-free driving. Alright, you do need to put some effort in, but the potential is there.

The dinky engine is perfect for chopping around urban and suburban routes. It's impressively linear once the turbo kicks in, making it smooth, forgiving and easy to get used to. It warms up faster than a moth on a sunbed and it's perfect for no-fuss short trips. The five-speed gearbox is light and precise, with tall gearing that partly offsets the lack of a sixth, but it's clear this version isn't meant to cover serious motorway mileage. It's a nice steer, though, responding quite keenly to tugs at the wheel and scampering along winding roads with gusto. The brakes on this nearly-new car were very grabby, but that should hopefully settle down with mileage.

The Astra is a solid car. You know what you're getting and, although some of the materials on basement models aren't up to scratch, at the very least, the car does a good job of providing straight-down-the-line mid-size transport for people who don't want to spend the extra on a slightly more spacious compact crossover or SUV.

Vauxhall dealers are usually open to a little haggling, too, so don't take the retail price as gospel. You should pay less than for a broadly equivalent crossover, so there's good value to be had here even if the fashion is currently for faux-4x4s.

This is a car for ordinary people. People who want a well-rounded car to give them transport, enough space and, crucially, the ability to cope with everything from taking the in-laws to Sunday lunch to taking the kids to the seaside. Parents will appreciate this sort of versatility, while some might prefer the lower seating position relative to SUVs, for the better outward view it offers during low-speed manoeuvres.

This car summed up in a single word: Studious.

If this car was a student at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, it would be in Hufflepuff house. It's a hard worker and a loyal companion.

Putting on the style with latest DS 3

By Sharon Walters

It's more than two months since the awful terrorist attacks in Paris, and the city for lovers still remains relatively quiet out on the streets.

But one famous spot buzzed earlier this week when DS revealed the new DS 3 and DS 3 Cabrio to journalists, dealers and carefully chosen people of import.

The stunning Louvre museum was the venue for the wraps to come off in a glittering display of the Spirit of Avant-Garde – adopted as the new logo last year as DS entered a new era as a brand in its own right, with no reference to Citroën.

Avant-garde translates from the French as the advance guard and has its origins as an old French military term. That is, the army unit which presses on ahead of the main field in battle. Since then it has been used in other areas such as the 'arts' to encompass 'new' 'innovative' and 'pioneering'.

And that is what DS is striving to achieve – to press forward and create something very different. An extremely difficult task but in a world full of so many dull-looking vehicles, both inside and out, and DS may well just succeed.

With the striking glass pyramid at the heart of the Louvre, the gateway to the unveiling, it was an impressive launch. With a background of art which in its day was often avant-garde, the emphasis was firmly on the way forward for the brand and the DS 3.

While some of it seemed a little over the top, especially the 'modern' dancers giving their interpretation of the avant-garde spirit, the car itself did impress, And perhaps it should have been given the opportunity to do just a little bit more in the presentation.

Dynamic

These latest models to be unveiled by DS Automobiles have new design features, latest-generation technology, ultimate attention to detail and a uniquely refined, yet dynamic character that are hallmarks of the DS brand.

Since the launch of DS 3 in 2010, 390,000 customers have succumbed to the charms of this hip and stylish Parisian supermini.

From London to Tokyo and Sydney to Buenos Aires, DS 3 has become an icon that is renowned for its distinctive personality, unique styling, driving pleasure and leading-edge technology.

New DS 3 and DS 3 Cabrio are undoubtedly even more attractive – with true French flair and style – with new design features (revised front end and personalisation opportunities) and enhanced functionality (connectivity, driving assistance systems).

For top-level performance, both in the city and out on the open road, the DS brand's versatile new models can be specified with the latest PureTech 130 three-cylinder turbo petrol engine and offer the latest-generation EAT6 automatic gearbox with the PureTech 110 petrol engine.

New DS 3 and DS 3 Cabrio will also be available in Performance specification, boasting an impressive 208hp (153kW).

And for the UK in particular, the new DS 3 and DS 3 Cabrio are of significant interest to our new car buyers. Britain is already the leading market for DS 3 sales. More DS 3 and DS 3 Cabrio models were sold in the UK last year than in France or any other global market. That is pretty impressive.

The DS design team had a goal to build on what has already made DS 3 a success – personalisation, styling and vitality – and to enhance it with contemporary technology and equipment, including efficient engines and a connected touchscreen.

"The New DS 3, a true success story, is reaffirming its brand kinship. With it, the DS family is complete.

"Refined, high-tech and high-performance, the stylish Parisian car appeals to customers looking for expressiveness, personalisation and motoring thrills.

"This sparkling model expresses an 'art de vivre' in town and country alike," said Yves Bonnefont, chief executive officer of DS Automobiles

It certainly has the style, now we have to see how it drives when it comes over to the UK in a few weeks.

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Audi R8 – a car that impresses all round

By Ian Donaldson

If you ever wondered why someone buys a car like Audi's new 205mph R8 V10 asphalt scorcher here are two clues (and that faintly unreal top speed is a third).

Clue number one is a prominent button on the finely leather wrapped steering wheel; press it and the already fruity exhaust note turns so rudely vocal you can be heard in the next county. A bit anti-social and naughty... but nice.

You'll have to wait for darkness to appreciate clue number two, and be standing at the back of the car. Where you can see the engine in all its 10-cylinder glory, basking beneath a transparent cover and, extraordinarily, bathing in the glow of its own lights.

Then there's the paint choices, with many of the people ordering the first of the these new models going for vivid orange. Or red, or in semi-military matt green.

You will have gathered that the R8 is not a machine for shrinking violets. Or poor ones either, with a choice of two versions, starting at £119,500 for a car with 533 horsepower, up fifteen on the outgoing model and a tiny bit more economical too – although you'll be lucky to see 20 to the gallon in everyday use.

Pay a bit more (£134,500) and your car adds a 'plus' to its title and the 5.2 litres push out a deeply impressive 602 horsepower. That elevates top speed from a mere 198mph (hah!) to all of 205mph. The sizzle to sixty-two takes either 3.2 or 3.5 seconds and either will surely feel fast enough.

These performance figures put this most powerful ever road going Audi deep into exotic Lamborghini territory at a fraction of the price. But then they're both products of the VW empire and share very similar engines. You might say that makes the Audi a bit of a bargain; not a phrase you hear often.

Lightness

Most of the early orders for the new A8 are for the dearer model which, like its less expensive sibling, is a little lighter than before and lower and wider, but shorter. A convertible model will follow in due course but there is no talk of smaller engines with fewer cylinders in the immediate future.

The added lightness is not down to paucity of equipment with the R8 which, as ever includes permanent four-wheel drive that turns the car into a properly practical all year round means of upmarket transport. There is even a modest boot at the front and enough space behind the seats for a briefcase and Gucci handbag.

Practicality moves sharply down the list of this car's attributes when you fire up the engine, especially from cold. The basso thunder will awaken the gods, and perhaps the neighbours too.

There is no option of a manual gearbox this time (a scant one per cent of owners previously opted for DIY gears) but the seven-speed manages things for you so convincingly you wonder why anyone might want to do it themselves.

Paddles behind the steering wheel let you attempt full-on Hamilton mode if the mood takes you, when the vast ceramic brakes of the R8 plus version will come in handy.

More surprising than the way the car goes and stops is the way it stays comfortable, certainly on the impeccable French roads of the car's press launch and hopefully on Blighty's more challenging surfaces.

No surprises that Audi tempts with a barrage of optional extras, from variable rate steering and adaptive suspension to extraordinary laser lights (at a neatly concise £3,000) and deeply sculpted seats, which proved less comfortable than the more adjustable standard versions.

Every new R8 has a big digital dashboard display which needed more study to fully fathom than a few hours at the wheel allowed. Also standard are sat nav and a cockpit swathed in lovely leather and as well applied as ever – Audi really do build cars that impress inwardly like no other at their price.

Impress outwardly too, especially if you like your car with an edge of restrained bling.

TESTED

Audi R8 V10 plus

Engine: 602bhp petrol

Warranty: Three years, 60,000 miles

Economy: The Audi R8 can do 23.0mpg

Insurance group: 50

Price: £134,500

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Update is practical, usable and a bargain

By Matt Joy

The UK's best selling plug-in hybrid last year was the Mitsubishi Outlander, but now there's an improved version.

It's a good time for all types of electric cars as diesel is going through some dark days, plus the crucial infrastructure is getting better all the time. No wonder then that the Mitsubishi Outlander is so popular, being one of the more affordable PHEVs (plug-in hybrid electric vehicle) as well as one of the most practical.

Now there's a substantially revised version ready for market with changes to the power train operation and the suspension as well as interior and exterior design. Equipment levels have been given a boost too and crucially the Outlander PHEV remains eligible for the Government's £5,000 grant.

The previous Outlander had all the typical SUV design cues you'd expect, but there was something about its proportions that made it look unusually tall for its length. Clearly that was something taken on by Mitsubishi HQ because the new Outlander is longer than before thanks to redesigned front and rear bumpers. The new design is sharper too, giving the Outlander a more distinctive face and boosting the feeling of quality with revised lights and alloy wheel designs too.

The Outlander is also doing great things for Mitsubishi's image in the UK as it currently dominates the PHEV segment and is helping to bring new buyers into the brand.

The Outlander sits comfortably in the mid-sized SUV segment and is well equipped to offer useful space for passengers and luggage. The high driving position is appealing with a low-set dashboard offering a good view out, with more than sufficient head and legroom. It's also spacious in the back, if not class-leading, while boot space is 463 litres – a little less than some rivals, but this is the flip side of carrying the extra electrical hardware.

Modes

The underlying hardware of the Outlander PHEV are as before, with electric motors front and rear combining with a 2.0-litre petrol engine to give a variety of hybrid modes. You can use the petrol engine as a range extender or as direct drive to the wheels, and run the batteries to give a power boost or save their output for pure electric mode. One change is the sharpening of the system response at low speeds, cutting the 0-25mph time by 50 per cent.

Mitsubishi has also worked at improving the overall driving experience.

Retuned suspension with stiffer underpinnings are a help, creating a more composed ride, while the handling is safe and secure for a car of this size and shape. But the Outlander PHEV's biggest appeal is the flexibility of its power train, offering sufficiently brisk performance when required alongside super-frugal economy in the right conditions. It's hard not to feel like you're beating the system when you're behind the wheel.

All things considered, it's hard not to see the Outlander PHEV as something of a bargain. It's priced the same as the equivalent diesel version with the government grant included which means you can sneak into the GX3h model for a measly £29,249 and get 18-inch alloys, keyless entry and start, Bluetooth and a decent audio system, with a few extra toys thrown in for this latest model. Go the whole hog for £35,999 and there's the satnav with reversing camera, powered tailgate, radar cruise control and even a heated steering wheel.

If there's a car for the moment then the Outlander PHEV is pretty much it. It's practical, comfortable and usable, making it perfect for family car duties, yet the higher-specification versions feel reasonably luxurious too. But it's the potential for zero emissions running and spectacular fuel consumption over short journeys that makes it such an appealing prospect.

This car summed up in a single word: Clever

If this car was a: new invention it would be rightly lauded as a bargain.

TESTED

Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV GX4hs, £35,999 (after £5,000 UK Government grant)

Engine:2.0-litre petrol unit plus twin electric motors producing 200bhp and 284lb/ft of torque

Transmission: CVT automatic gearbox driving all four wheels

Performance: Top speed 106mph, 0-62mph in 11 seconds

Economy: 156mpg combined

Emissions: 42g/km of CO2

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2007/07 VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE 1.4 5 door, Silver, 50,000 miles £3495
2007/57 VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 1.8 AUTOMATIC 26,000 miles, Beige £3995
2007/07 VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.3 DIESEL ENERGY Grey, 44,000 miles £4350
2007/07 VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.4 SXi TWINPORT 5 door, Black, 36,902 miles £4995
2010/60 VAUXHALL ASTRA EXCLUSIVE 1.4i ESTATE grey 50,000 miles £6650
2011/61 VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6 EXCITE 5 door, Silver 23,000 miles £7995
2012/62 VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6 ACTIVE 5 door, White, 22,000 miles £8495
2012/62 VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.4 ACTIVE 5 door, Red, 10,000 miles £8495
2012/62 VAUXHALL ASTRA GTC SPORT 1.7 3 door, Red, 17,291 miles £9650
2014/64 VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.3 DESIGN CDTi ECOFLEX 5 door, Silver, 7,316 miles £10995
2014/64 VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6 TECH LINE GT 5 door, Grey, 19,980 miles £11995
2014/64 VAUXHALL ASTRA GTC SPORT 2.0 CDTi S/S White, 8,759 miles £12250

Vauxhall Corsa Selection
2004/04 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 SXi 5 door, Red, 39,000 miles £2995
2012/62 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 ACTIVE A/C 3 door, BLUETOOTH Blue , 15,000 miles £6350
2012/12 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4 SXi AC 5 door, Green, 16,080 miles £6495
2012/12 VAUXHALL CORSA SE 1.2 5 door, Silver, 19,567 miles £6995
2013/63 VAUXHALL CORSA ENERGY 1.2 A/C 3 door, Red, 14,153 miles £6995
2013/13 VAUXHALL CORSA ENERGY 1400 5 door, Pepperdust Metallic 16,800 miles £7495
2012/12 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 LIMITED EDITION 3 door, White, 20,195 miles £7995
2013/13 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 LIMITED EDITION 3 door, 17,000 miles £7995
2014/14 VAUXHALL CORSA LIMITED EDITION 3 door, White, 11,400 miles £8995
2010/10 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.6 VXR 3 door, Blue, 26,908 miles £9495
2015/15 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4 SE AUTOMATIC 5 door, Black, 13,332 miles £10995
2013/13 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.6 VXR 3 door, Blue, 13,000 miles £11495

Vauxhall Insignia Selection
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2013/63 VAUXHALL INSIGNIA LIMITED EDITION CDTi AUTOMATIC Black, Low miles £12250
2015/15 VAUXHALL INSIGNIA 1.8i VVT 140 SRi Hatchback. White, 9,583 miles £12795
2015/15 VAUXHALL INSIGNIA 2.0 CDTi DIESEL SRi 140PS SAT NAV Hatchback, Red, 7,100 miles £16495
2015/15 VAUXHALL INSIGNIA SPORTS TOURER CDTi BI-TURBO 195 PS VX LINE Red, 7,300 miles £17995

Vauxhall Mokka Selection
2014/14 VAUXHALL MOKKA 1.6 EXCLUSIV 115PS 5 door Hatchback, St/Sp, Blue, 18,737miles £11495
2014/14 VAUXHALL MOKKA 1.7 CDTI TECH LINE Blue, 36,000 miles £12450
2012/62 VAUXHALL MOKKA 1.7 CDTi SE 130PS 5 door Hatchback, White, 15,000 miles £13995
2014/14 VAUXHALL MOKKA 1.7 CDTI SE White, 18,000 miles £13995

Vauxhall Meriva and Zafira Selection
2008/08 VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.8 SRi MPV Blue, 59,000 miles £4995
2011/60 VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.6i 16V EXCLUSIV 5 door, Silver, 39,891 miles £5995
2012/62 VAUXHALL MERIVA 1.4i 16V EXCLUSIV 5 door, Oriental Blue, Lady Owner £6495
2012/12 VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.8 DESIGN Silver, 36,000 miles £7995
2012/12 VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.7 CDTi EXCLUSIV Silver, 55,000 miles £7995
2013/13 VAUXHALL MERIVA 1.4i SE VVT 140PS TURBO Flame Red, 20,796 miles £8995
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2014/14 VAUXHALL MERIVA 1.4 TECHLINE Black, 5,400 miles £9495
2013/63 VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 2.0CDTi SE White, 24, 000 miles £12650

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2007/07 RENAULT CLIO CAMPUS Black, 44,000 miles £2650
2005/05 MGF SUNSTORM Silver, 75,000 miles, IMMACULATE £2995
2001/51 SUZUKI GRAND VITARA 1.6 Silver, 88,000 miles, One Lady Owner From New £2995
2005/05 VW BEETLE 1.6 CABRIOLET 3 door, Blue, 55,500 miles £3995
2011/61 RENAULT WIND 1.2 TCE GT LINE 2 door, Blue, 45,386 miles £5495
2012/62 FIAT 500 LOUNGE RHD 3 door, Red, 21,000 miles £6495
2012/12 NISSAN NOTE N-TEC + Red, 30,162 miles £6995
2007/57 HONDA CIVIC TYPE 'R' 3 door, Silver, 47,000 miles £7495
2013/63 SKODA FABIA 1.6 TDi CR 105BHP MONTE CARLO SPECIAL EDITION 5 door, White, 31,100 miles £7995
2012/12 MINI 1.6 CLUBMAN D ESTATE Silver, 28,432 miles £8995
2012/62 NISSAN JUKE 1.6 ACENTA PREMIUM 5 door, Grey, 17,769 miles £9995
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Finance example: 05/05 Nissan X-trail 2.2 dCi, Cash Price £3495, Deposit 300, Amount of credit £3195, Fixed interest rate 6.25% Flat rate, 11.8% Apr, 60 Payments of £69.90 (£16.13 per week) Total amount payable £4793.44 (Includes £150 Document fee and £150 Completion fee, Subject to status)

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DRIVETIME

Jazz best in class for safety

The all-new Honda Jazz has been awarded with independent safety organisation Euro NCAP's prestigious Best in Class 2015 award in the supermini category.

Earlier in 2015 the Honda Jazz achieved a maximum 5-star safety rating. Jazz took the title from a field of nine superminis in total.

Each year, Euro NCAP publishes a list of cars that have performed the best in their respective categories. To achieve a 'Best in Class' award from Euro NCAP, cars from each category are assessed against a weighted sum of the scores in each of the four key areas of assesment: Adult Occupant, Child Occupant, Pedestrian and Safety assist. This sum is used as the basis for comparison of the vehicles.

Secretary General, Dr. Michiel van Ratingen of Euro NCAP commented, "Euro NCAP congratulates Honda for the Jazz, which received the Best in Class of 2015 in the supermini category. The award recognizes the Jazz's five star performance and Honda's safety equipment strategy which make it the top performer in this segment."

All grades of Jazz are fitted with Honda's City-Brake Active System as standard. The mid and upper grades of the Jazz range features Honda's 'Advanced Driver Assist System', a comprehensive suite of active-safety technologies including: Forward Collision Warning, Traffic Sign Recognition System, Intelligent Speed Limiter, Lane Departure Warning and High-beam Support System. Additionally the Jazz features Honda's Advanced Compatibility Engineering body structure, designed to redirect collision energy away from the passenger compartment, while minimising the damage caused to other impacted vehicles.

"We are thrilled to have the Jazz named as the Best in Class supermini 2015 by Euro NCAP," said Honda Motor Europe senior vice president, Philip Ross. "Honda is committed to providing customers with high quality products that meet the most stringent safety standards in Europe. This commitment to safety is highlighted by each Honda model available in Europe – Civic, CR-V, Jazz and the HR-V – achieving the full 5-star rating from Euro NCAP. 2015 was a big year for Honda and we have seen the Jazz and our other new products being embraced and appreciated by the customers, as well as organisations such as Euro NCAP."

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Recession rates, FREE QUOTES
We take the stress away
40 years experience
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A MAN WITH A VAN Single items, flat/house removals/clearances, local/nationwide. Call Steve 0121 422 2999 or 07815 043724

A2B REMOVALS Cheap and reliable removal service. Insured. 07817 842980 or 01902 744829.

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830670 / 01384 940260.

roofing

S&F ROOFING & GUTTERING
Flat, Main roofs, rubber or felt, repaired and replaced, all repointing. Guttering repaired and replaced.
BEAT ALL QUOTES GUARANTEED
Call Sean 01902 829158 8am to 8pm

PROPERTY SOLUTIONS
A*1 GUTTERING
cleaned, repaired, replaced. facias/ soffits, UPVC washdowns, all roofing/ repointing work, Free quotes, 8am-8pm
01902 722447

MG ROOFING Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters. Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.

painters / decorators

CALL M & B DECORATORS
City & Guilds
No job too small
Free Quote
01902 494555

A PROFESSIONAL DECORATING service by RC Decorating. Free competitive quotes: 07773 025880.

INTERIOR PAINTER AND DECORATOR Friendly and reliable, clean and tidy.Call Deb 01384 829473 / 07502 396385

M C I PAINTING & DECORATING Over 30 yrs experience,City & Guilds approved. Free Quotes. 07890 879 892 01902 838521 .

MTK PAINTER & DECORATER- Competitive quotes.OAP discounts 01384 340930/ 07825 558940.

plans prepared

ADAM DESIGN, Building Plans. Drawn and submitted to council. Tel: 01902 620200 / 07841 654037. Email: adamdesign@sky.com

BUILDING Plans: Prepared/submitted. K J Bradley 01902 373248 07792 165767. www.plans4u.co.uk

plumbers

G M PLUMBING SERVICES Complete Bathrooms, Kitchens, Taps Showers,Blockages 07976 012468

plumbing & heating

KEIRON JONES HEATING Full central heating from £2,200. Call 01902 403823 / 07811 855231.

plastering

DOMESTIC PLASTERING
rendering & small building work undertaken. 35 years experience. For a free quote
Call Roy
07887 495726
07583 643932
www.domesticplastering.co.uk

A EVANS & D DAVIES PLASTERING SERVICES, 30 yrs exp. All aspects undertaken. Clean and reliable. 07773 278630, 07939 176564

STEVES PLASTERING SERVICE Clean and Reliable, All Work Undertaken. All Areas. Call 0121 567 5919 / 07977 262943.

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Fast, friendly service
All areas covered
All sizes
Same day service
Freephone
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07904 915016

BLITZ SKIPS
- AFFORDABLE SKIPS
- 2-50 YARD SKIPS AVAILABLE
- PUNJABI SPEAKERS

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01902 870370
0121 517 1111

AN ABSOLUTE AFFORDABLE CASTLE SKIP HIRE
Mini, midi and large skips
Also available mini digger with driver
01384 237577
01902 405745
07719 671845

BIG JOHN MOVES RUBBISH! No Skips, we load, fast friendly service, 25 Lister Rd, Dudley DY2 8JR, Est 35 years, 01384 232359.

GRINSELLS SKIP HIRE LTD. Mini, midi, maxi, large skips. Fast, friendly & reliable service. Monday to Saturday, 6 day service. Call: 0121 555 6060.

STONES SKIP HIRE 0121 557 1480 / 07886 721875 www.stoneysskiphire.co.uk

upholstery

UPHOLSTERY SERVICES 3pcs/ springs/caravans/pubs/club/antiques. 01902 689844 / 07817 842980.

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For items upto £250.
Online at
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CENTRA HEAT
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£200 OFF/Trade in old boiler
Installed in February. *T&C apply*
01902 845211

t.v. / home entertainment

service

AERIAL & TV SPECIALISTS
Free Estimates on any TV Repairs, Plasma, LCD, 3D, LED, Projection. All areas covered 8 till late. 7 days. Digital aerials, Sky installation. Wall mounts & TV setups.
07850 330251

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses have the required Passport information.

pets corner

GREYHOUNDS MAKE WONDERFUL PETS
All neutered, innoculated and chipped.
Call Greyhound Trust 01922 412212 or www.rgtwolverhampton.co.uk

GREYHOUNDS MAKE WONDERFUL PETS
All neutered, innoculated and microchipped.
Call 01922 412212 or www.rgtwolverhampton.co.uk
RGT Wolverhampton @RGTWolves

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

BINKS Cheeky, black, 7 month old neutered male cat, looking for a permanent home. 07847 360784.

JACK RUSSELL cross chihuahua, vet checked, small, 2 bitches, mom and dad can be seen. 01384 233910.

LOTTIE
Very small staffie, spayed girl, very good on and off lead, good with other dogs, Children and other adults.
Lottie came into resuce as her last elderly owner couldnt take care of her properly.
Call Martin at Dog Samaritans 01384 241034.
Lottie is now in a Foster home in the Dudley area.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering any obligations.

business services

ELR HOMECARE LTD
Personal care, medication, dementia, companionship, end of life care and much more.
07718944238
emma@elrhomecare.co.uk
www.elrhomecare.co.uk
CQC Registered

commercial premises sale / let

BUNGALOW/LARGE YARD, 7 containers. Two workshops with ramps. £260,000. 07836 780190.

UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties: 0121 520 5318.

business directory

accountants

ACCOUNTANCY SERVICES for Small Business. Competitive Rates. Call 01902 882600

6 Property

accommodation to let

A 3 BED HOUSE Park-Village. 3 bed 1st floor flat Bilston. 1 Bedroom Finchfield. DSS ok 01902 686605

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

A TWO BED FLAT off Tettenhall Rd, CH, DG. Off road parking, £115.50 pw 01902 340073 / 07770 660636.

A TWO BED FLAT off Tettenhall Rd, CH, DG. Off road parking, £115.50 pw 01902 340073 / 07770 660636.

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

HIGH QUALITY STUDIO FLATS Tettenhall area. No DSS. 07976 263435 / 01902 700028.

RECENTLY REFURBISHED 1 and 2 bed flats, Netherton, close to Merry Hill, DSS welcome. Call 01562 885668 or 07831 200692.

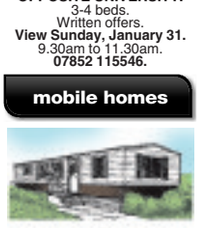
NEW

WEST MIDLANDS
Have you paid a rental deposit to a landlord that has not been returned or insured?
We can get your deposit returned with compensation!
Call RENTSERVE today
0800 077 6868

houses for sale

STOKE STUDENT HOUSE OPPOSITE UNIVERSITY.
3-4 beds.
Written offers.
View Sunday, January 31.
9.30am to 11.30am.
07852 115546.

mobile homes



LUXURY MOBILE HOME
On small site for the over 50s in Worcestershire, 2 bed, 2 bath, on end plot with large garden and decking area, immaculate throughout, many extras.
£35,000.
Telephone 07450 861457 or 07931 602140.

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

SELL IT FAST SELL IT LOCAL
01902 317878

ClassifiedAds

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30 YEARS EXPERIENCE
WE PAY 100% of purchase price EVERY TIME!
BLACK COUNTRY HOMES
We buy any house
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WE CAN BEAT ANY PRICE
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100% MARKET VALUE IN 28 DAYS!
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IN ANY CONDITION
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7 Jobs

building & construction

ALUMINIUM SHOPFRONT FITTER
required
for busy Dudley based company.
Immediate start.
Experience required.
Involves long hours and working away from home on occasions.
Please email sales@mgshopfronts.com

courses

CRH Transport Training Train and Test at our centre in West Brom 0121 3231777 crhtraining.co.uk

drivers

DELIVERY DRIVER/WAREHOUSE PERSON To drive our 7.5 tonne vehicle, must have CPC and Digicard for a Dudley based potato merchant. Apply in writing to Mrs D Bradly 61 Tower Street, Dudley DY1 1NH.

engineering

STEEL FABRICATORS/PLATERS Required to a join structural steelwork company. People required with experience working from drawings, able to manufacture all types of structural steel. Full time day and night shift positions available with good rates of pay and conditions Please contact Gary on 01384 258400.

finance & accounting

A FORWARD THINKING DUDLEY BASED ACCOUNTANCY PRACTICE IS CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR A BOOKKEEPER
to deal with a wide variety of clients. The candidate should have plenty of experience of bookkeeping and experience of preparing management accounts is preferable. Experience with bookkeeping software is essential.
Box Number P20213 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

hair & beauty

HAIR STYLIST REQUIRED full/ part time. Elite hairdressing. Tel 01902 884555

full time - general

BOB RICHARDSON TOOLS Dudley
require
GOODS INWARDS / OUTWARDS POSITION
Full Time
The above position requires the applicant to be efficient, very thorough with good attention to detail.
Computer literacy is essential.
Duties:
receiving goods & stock control, displaying goods, packaging and sending goods out and handling returns.
SALARY NEGOTIABLE
Full CV to:
accounts@toolstoday.co.uk

EXPERIENCED GLASS FIBRE LAMINATOR required. Full Time Permanent Position. Hand/Spray application making products for the Building, Motor, Leisure and Engineering industries Mon - Fri 7.30 - 4pm with overtime available. Competitive Salary Tel 01384 354354

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

part time - general

NEWS DELIVERERS
needed in all areas of Gornal & Woodsetton
Please contact
Customer Services on 0800 174 064

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

AUDI A3 1.9TDi 2003, MoT June, 93,000 miles, FSH, 2 owners, very good condition. £1,900 ono. 07722 385693.

AUDI A4 18T. 2003, low mileage for year. Service history. MoT'd, Immaculate condition inside and out. £1,800. 01902 829872.

BMW 3 SERIES, 2008, 318i, 62,000 miles, very good condition, 10 months MoT, full service history, £4,800 ono. 07814 667837.

SELLING YOUR CAR?
We have a package to suit every budget.
Packages start from as little as
£21.00 for 6 nights
Plus
6 nights free if you do not sell.
CALL 01902 317878

FORD FIESTA ZETEC S1.6 TDCi (95) 11 plate, 48k,SH, frozen white. All extras. Immaculate throughout. £5,995. 07970 705466(T)or Part Ex

JAGUAR S TYPE 2.7 DIESEL
05 plate, Goodwood green, full leather, 10 months MoT, Sat Nav, 6 track CD. Very good condition.
£2,500.
Telephone 01902 831158.

KIA RIO DOMINO, 2010, 35,600 miles, black, electric windows, air con, fsh, long MoT, immaculate, bargain £3,450. 07756 624703.

MITSUBISHI LANCER 2 LITRE SPORT ESTATE
2006, 65,000 miles, MoT January 2017, dark blue, excellent condition.
£1,800 ono.
01902 893414 / 07856 898558.

Shropshire STAR

NIGHT SECURITY OFFICER

The successful applicant will be responsible for the security of the building and site during out of hours working. There is a rotating shift pattern in operation with other officers and the position involves both weekend and bank holiday working.

The successful applicant is likely to have held a similar position, will have excellent communication skills and possess the initiative and confidence to deal with any situation that may arise.

If you are interested in applying for this role please send your full CV and cover letter to:

HR DEPARTMENT
MIDLAND NEWS ASSOCIATION
51 - 53 QUEEN STREET
WOLVERHAMPTON
WV1 1ES
E-MAIL: HR@MNAMEDIA.CO.UK

Closing date: 31st January, 2016

TOYOTA YARIS TSPIRIT
2011, 31,964 miles, grey, abs, electric windows, air bag, air con, fsh, MoT, metallic paint, central locking, pas, alloys, stereo, navigation system.
£5,500.
07815 776523.

VAUXHALL ASTRA SXi 1400CC 2006, silver, 56,000 miles, good condition, MoT'd, £2,000 ono. 07956 438279.

VAUXHALL INSIGNIA ELITE
2014, 30k, auto, Est. 2.0CDTI 195bhp bi-turbo, dealer fsh, warranty. HTD electric mem seats, privacy, Sat Nav, DAB, electric tailgate. 19ins alloys. BiXenon, LED run lights, sensors, immaculate.
£14,250.
07971 365912.

cars under £1500

BMA www.bmacars.com Est. Here 25 Years
25 CARS FROM £500
Full MOT's
07956 988517
Dale Street, Bilston, WV14 7JY

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

CITROEN C4 VTS 06 reg, Petrol, silver, 3-dr, 99,000 miles, 8 months MoT. Good condition. £895. Telephone 07787 410300.

DAEWOO LONAS 1.4 1998, red, 43K miles, MoT May, one previous owner. £395. 07973 256153.

FORD FOCUS LX 1.8, W reg, 5dr, petrol, black, six months MoT, £350. 07552 343585.

FORD FOCUS LX W reg, 5 door, 1796cc, petrol, black, six months MoT, £425. 07512 044868.

FORD MONDEO 2 LITRE LX 2002
Green, A/C, CD, alloys, very good condition, MoT June 16, just serviced, 2 owners, 49,000 genuine miles.
£1,350 ovno.
07887 593617.

FORD MONDEO 2003, 2 Litre Ghia, 131k, MoT Sept, good condition and runner, £250. Space needed. 01902 344177.

FORD MONDEO MK3, 51 plate, diesel, long MoT, black, quick sale £295 ono. 01902 497406.

GRAND VOYAGER, 2002 2.5 Diesel, Manual, good condition for year, 154,000 miles, MoT till June. £1,275. o.n.o. 07976 600110.

HONDA JAZZ 1.4, 2002, 73,000 miles, silver, abs, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, air con, fsh, alarm, long MoT, £1,295. 07792 356203.

KIA PICANTO 1.0GS 5dr, 54 reg, 77k, red, 12 months MoT, good condition, excellent for new driver, £800 ono. 01902 847175.

NISSSAN MICRA. 05. Full MoT. Engne 40,000 miles. Very good condition. £1,050. 01384 251328 or 07972 169554.

PEUGEOT 206 LOOK, 2007, 1360cc, 44,700 miles, red, abs, electric windows, air con, full MoT, metallic paint, pas, CD, very good condition, £1,199. 07879 403302.

RENAULT MODUS 1.5DCi PRIVILEGE
2006, 06 reg, 3 owners, 108,000 miles, fsh, 11 months MoT, good tyres all round, recent service and MoT.
£950.
01902 753118: 07775 901378.

SABARU FORESTER, All Weather, silver, 03 reg., long MoT, fsh, lady owner, tidy car, £825 ono. 01902 791206, after 5pm.

TOYOTA LUCIDA People Carrier, MoT, Green, N42 HAB. £450. 07779 740140 / 07505 703217.

AUTOMATIC
VW GOLF DIESEL AUTOMATIC,
T reg new MoT, Cambelt, service etc, excellent condition, any trial **£1,250.**
07800 637961/01902 753545.

classic cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Cars. Private cash buyer.Instant cash settlement. Any age. Any condition. 01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

JAGUAR XJS 4.0
1991. Only 66,000 miles. Light metallic blue. Sports auto box. Heated leather seats. SH, 10 months MoT. Good condition for year.
£3,500 ono.
07904 662468 (Bridgnorth).

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Drive All Seasons
Lessons Starting FROM
5 Lessons £50
10 Lessons £89
Manual & Automatic
Franchise Opportunities Available
COVERING WOLVERHAMPTON, WALSALL & CANNOCK.
Free Unlimited Theory
07517 845477
www.driveallseasons.co.uk

AMAZING OFFER 5 lessons £40, 10 lessons £80, £18 an hour there after. Call now 07958 051263.

Homer's
Mini, Clio, Corsa, Fiesta, Punto, 207, KA, Fiat 500, Yaris.
10 Hours £89! Five Hours £50!
2 Hours £20! All Areas Covered
MALE & FEMALE INSTRUCTORS
MANUAL & AUTOMATIC
ADI/PDI REQUIRED. Gift vouchers available for £10
07432 458100 / 01562 870050
01384 234954 / 0121 5640090
01902 580065
www.homersdrivingschool.co.uk

motorbikes

PEUGEOT VIVA CITY 100, 2007, MoT June 2016, £550 ono. 07909 942618.

WE BUY BIKES immaculate, as new, garaged / non runners. Cash paid. Peter All Bikes, 01902 312939 bikesallspares@gmail.com

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

MCB
TOP PRICES PAID FOR ALL SCRAP CARS, VANS, BIKES, CLASSICS
Tel: 01902 408176
1000's of parts available at all times
MONMORE RD. WV1 2TZ

A BETTER PRICE
for scrap or damaged cars and commercials. Spares for sale.
NINE LOCKS VEHICLE DISMANTLERS LTD
Brierley Hill 01384 76566 or 70553. Evenings 75397. DY5 3JZ.

ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Evening 07813 184611 Oldbury Area.

vehicles wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, 01902 597035.

spares & accessories

accessories & services

FOUR WINTER tyres 195/50/R15, excellent tread, hardly used, plus wheels to fit Ford Fiesta. £275. 07767 152652.

clutches / brakes / gearboxes

A CLUTCH CHANGE MOBILE
30 yrs experience
ALL AREAS COVERED
Call Bob
01384 251328 or 07972 169554 anytime
For Example:
Citroen C1, C2, C3
Hyundai 110
Toyota Yaris
Clios & Micras
Ring for quotes on others!

ClassifiedAds

mobile mechanics

MOBILE MECHANICS Service & repairs. Headgasket, clutches and cambelts. 07747 848469.

spares/parts

BATTERIES FROM £29.99: Corsa, Fiesta, Focus, Clio etc: 2 year guarantee - Wolves Hire - 01902 746723. Tettenhall Road WV6 0LE.

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

INSOLVENCY ACT 1986

IN BANKRUPTCY

DUDLEY COUNTY COURT

NO 316 of 2008 **RE: STEWART MONTAGUE SWANSON**

Who at the date of the bankruptcy order 2nd September 2008, resided at 163 Brickhouse Road, Rowley Regis, West Midlands B65 8EX and lately carrying on business 'SMS Home Maintenance', 163 Brickhouse Road, Rowley Regis, B65 8EX.

D.O.B: 21 October 1969

NOTE: the above-named was discharged from the proceedings and may no longer have a connection with the addresses listed.

I intend to pay within four months from *24th February 2016* (being the last day for proving) the first and final dividend of 29.06 p/£.

Creditors who have not yet proved their debts must do so by *24th February 2016* otherwise they will be excluded from the dividend. The required proof of debt form is available on the Insolvency Service website (www.bis.gov.uk/insolvency, select "Forms" and then form 6.37). Alternatively, you can contact my office at Second Floor, 3 Piccadilly Place, London Road, Manchester M1 3BN or telephone 0161 234 8500 to supply a form.

Mr D Gibson, Official Receiver and trustee

10 Personals

general

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

personal

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE REP
Tel: 01902 489 181

GENUINE, CARING, QUIET PETITE BRUNETTE 32.
Own home and car, seeks similar male 30-45, no tattoos or piercings, no emotional baggage please.
Respond with photo to
PO BOX 7111
Kingswinford
DY6 6AU.

NEW YEAR, NEW START
Attractive 36 year old male, whose genuine, honest, caring and is fun to be around.
I am looking for a like minded genuine lady aged 27 to 44 years for quality nights in and out, holidays, weekends away and who like going to football matches, for friendship hopefully leading to relationship.
Genuine replies only.
Photo appreciated (returned).
Box Number C20211 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

WOLVERHAMPTON GUY, 55
Slim, fit, single, own house and car, non smoker, very loving, understanding, WLTM slim, medium lady, local, for genuine friendship / relationship.
Please write to Box Number P20207, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

2016 PRINCE CHARMING
Aged 60's, young at heart with lots to offer the right princess 2016, aged between 55-66 years old with a GSOH of slim build to make a fresh start in 2016.
The past has gone ladies, so ladies don't delay reply straight away.
All letters replied to. Box Number P20209 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

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Place your items for sale with great offers from the Express & Star and *reach over half a million people**.

We don't have any hidden fees, expensive delivery charges or commission payments - just a great service, at great value for money enabling you to buy and sell locally.

Contact us today to place your advert

TELEPHONE - 01902 317878
ON LINE - bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk
IN PERSON - At your local Express & Star office

*SOURCE: Jicreg 01.10 .2012. Private advertisers only.

Buy Local, Sell Local ClassifiedAds

Local Specialists

Appliance Repairs

Washing Machine Repairs and all White Goods
"Don't go and buy a new one, get it repaired..."
AA DOMESTICS
14 Hagley Road, Halesowen
01384 413590
07981 398758

Building and Landscaping

APOLLO G.C.L.
GROUNDWORKS • CIVILS • LANDSCAPE
APOLLO G.C.L Are accredited with both Construction Line and CHAS. With a client satisfaction rating of 9.8 and a client base which includes Amazon UK and Broxap.
We always strive to deliver customer satisfaction.
So, call us for a free estimate if you require, groundworks, drainage, blockwork, brickwork, housing or office extensions, internal refurbishment or landscaping.
0800 043 4455

Blinds & Curtains

Blinds4Less
Choose From a fantastic range!
-Pleated -Venetians
-Romans -Curtains
-Verticals -Awnings
-Rollers -Shutters
New range of Chainless Verticals and Night and Day Rollers
Give us a try before you buy!
Contact us on 01384 886162 and 07989 588728
Blinds4lessdirect.com

Local Specialists
Our Specialist Section offers you a wide range of local businesses and tradesman to deal with your needs and requirements.

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Cressage Paving
Specialists in:
Block Paving, Tarmacing, Landscaping, Gravelling, Patios, Forecourts, Fencing and Driveways
All Groundwork undertaken
FREE WRITTEN QUOTATION
Mini Digger & Driver available
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Mob: 07879 073702
www.cressage-group.co.uk

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• BLOCK PAVING
• TARMACADAM
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• AGGREGATES AND CHIPPINGS
• HIGH PRESSURE CLEANING
MINI DIGGER AND DRIVER HIRE SERVICE
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www.trentlandscapes.co.uk

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Driveways

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FREE estimate • 15 years experience • Fully insured
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Web:wwwacepavingservices.co.uk
Email:acepavingservices@outlook.com
Cradley Enterprise Centre, Maypole Fields, Halesowen B63 2QB

Double Glazing

MISTY UNITS REPLACED
Buy Direct from the manufacturer. Est. 1999
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Heathens plotting for a stadium to call their own

CRADLEY insist they are willing to listen to anybody who may be able to help in their quest to find land for a stadium of their own.

The Heathens have announced they will host their first meeting back at Monmore Green on Easter Monday, March 28.

With the club already on the verge of securing record season ticket sales, they are anticipating a bumper crowd for their return to the Wolverhampton venue after a year at Perry Barr.

However, club bosses remain desperate to achieve their goal of finding the club a home track of their own within the area.

With their search for a suitable plot of land ongoing, club director Nigel Pearson says any individuals or businesses who may have land available should get in touch.

"It's an exciting time for the club," Pearson said. "The ultimate aim remains to see us racing back in the Dudley/Sandwell area, but for now the next best thing is Monmore Green and we are all delighted to be back there.

"We will continue to work with our planning experts on land we feel may be suitable and, in the meantime, if another party believes they have a suitable venue then our door is always open to discuss this with them."

Meanwhile, supporters have rushed to snap up tickets for the Heathens' Season Launch Night at Cradley Heath Liberal Club, at 8pm on Monday, March 21.

Fewer than 30 tickets remain for the event at £5 and are available from the club shop in Cradley Heath Market or on the club's official website cradleyheathens.co via PayPal.

Stour pay penalty for indiscipline

Full back Joe Bridger takes the ball into contact

Preston Grasshoppers 29
Stourbridge 18

DESPITE outscoring their opponents by three tries to two Stour left Lightfoot Green empty-handed, victims of their own indiscipline which gifted Preston full-back Sean Taylor five penalty goals.

Stour started briskly, an early penalty by outside-half Rod Petty followed by a try from Nathan Bressington following some neat footwork.

But their inability to hold onto possession brought Stour under pressure, Preston capitalising when no.8 Alastair Murray scored from the back of a driving maul.

Repeat offending saw Stour second row Robbie Hurrell take a spell in the sin-bin and he was joined soon after by centre Joe Heatley as Taylor's boot kicked Preston to a 22-8 lead by the hour mark.

Stour hit back with a short-range try by scrum half Toby Handley.

Sensing their opponents starting to tire and boosted by the fresh legs of their subs bench, Stour upped the tempo, but disaster struck when an unpunished high hit on replacement hooker Billy Harding saw the ball go loose near Stour's 22. It was hacked through and with the cover wrong-footed Murray pounced to score his second try for the hosts.

Stour managed a consolation try from a rolling maul for replacement Connor Nicholls.

This weekend, Stourbridge host Leicester Lions at Stourton Park, kick off at 3pm.

Police force their way into title reckoning

PRACTICE made perfect for Norton Social A's Adam Ness in the Stourbridge Snooker League.

Before the Premier Division clash with Baggeridge Social, Ness warmed up with a 132 break and then rolled in a 108 to help the reigning champions edge home.

Title rivals West Midlands Police and Brandhall Labour went head-to-head with the Police bagging a 3-2 win.

Amblecote Institute A won 3-2 at Hotshots SC B. The two Pockets SC teams went down to the last frame with the A team prevailing.

Kinver Cons B's Division One title hopes received a double boost as they beat Norton Social B 4-1 while second-placed Kingswinford Cons B were beaten 4-1 at Amblecote Institute A.

Moor Pool & Snooker C ended a run of 10 defeats with a 3-2 triumph at Stourbridge Institute A.

In Division Two, the top three all enjoyed 4-1 victories.

Stourbridge Old Edwardians won at Kinver Cons D, while Amblecote RBL A fought off Stourbridge Institute C. The Legion's B team also won 4-1 at Amblecote Institute C.

Bottom team, Stourbridge Institute D enjoyed a 4-1 win over Amblecote Institute D.

Results – Premier Division: Hotshots SC B 2 Amblecote Inst A 3; Norton Social A 3 Baggeridge Social 2; West Midlands Police 3 Brandhall Labour 2; Pockets SC B 2 Pockets SC A 3. Byes: Moor Pool & Snooker A, Hotshots SC A.
First Division: Amblecote Inst B 4 Kingswinford Cons B 1; Wombourne 3 Kinver Cons C 2; Kingswinford Cons A 3 Kinver Cons A 2; Kinver Const B 4 Norton Social B 1; Stourbridge Inst A 2 Moor Pool & Snooker C 3.
Second Division: Amblecote RBL A 4 Stourbridge Inst C 1; Amblecote Institute C 1 Amblecote RBL B 4; Stourbridge Institute D 4 Amblecote Inst D 1; Kingswinford SC 3 Kingswinford Cons C 2; Kinver Cons D 1 S/b Old Edwardians 4. Bye: Kingswinford Cons D.

Gym project will be tribute to Steve

PRIORY Park Boxing Club has vowed to win its latest battle so it can pay a fitting tribute to vice-chairman Steve Gough.

The Dudley-based club is striving to finish the refurbishment of its Priory Road base and chairman Paul Gough is determined to see the job through in honour of his cousin Steve, who recently died.

Aged 55, Steve played a crucial role alongside Paul in the club's impressive growth over the past two decades.

The duo forged a strong bond both inside and outside the ring and an emotional Paul paid a heartfelt tribute to a man who was the life and soul of the club.

"He was just a really likeable guy," said Paul. "We weren't like cousins, we were more like brothers.

"My wife Georgina and Steve's wife Tracey are sisters. He actually got Georgina and myself together.

"The whole family is devastated. This is a massive shock. He had been ill but he was on the mend. He was getting better.

Void

"On the Wednesday at training he was great, he was laughing and joking with all the lads. He was a proper joker. He loved playing practical jokes on the lads.

"There is a massive void at the club that can never be filled. It just makes everyone more determined to crack on and ensure the club keeps moving in the right direction.

"It makes us more determined now to get the gym finished.

"Then when we open the gym we can honour his name and have a memorial in there for him, so that he will always be remembered for all the years he put in."

Steve was a well-known figure on the local boxing scene and messages of support have been flooding in.

"The response has been amazing," said Paul. "The support from people and the offers of help have been brilliant. I am sure he will have a massive turnout at his funeral."

Priory Park's Paul Gough, left, has paid tribute to his late cousin Steve

The club have enjoyed numerous successes down the years after the Goughs took charge.

Paul said: "Steve got into boxing through me, because I used to box. He had always liked the sport but his background was rugby. He was a very good player and turned down the chance of a contract with St Helens when he left school because he didn't want to leave the area.

"We started off with one boxer and it just kept getting bigger and bigger. I concentrated on the training and he ran the gym and took care of all the organisation. He was the head of the committee really.

"We have had a lot of success over the years and Steve made that possible.

Steve is survived by widow Tracey and son Mitchell.

The funeral will take place at Gornal Crematorium at 12.20pm on Tuesday, February 2. Family flowers only. Donations to Priory Park Boxing Club.

Team win by Myles, but Town birched

Team Dudley 2 Kington Town 1

TEAM Dudley recorded their first win since a 5-0 triumph over Darlaston on August 29.

The students took a deserved lead at The Dell on the half hour mark through Myles Nettleford. The lead lasted 10 minutes as Miles Langford half-volleyed past Liam Jones.

With 10 minutes gone in the second half it was 2-1 Team Dudley as Nettleford side-footed home.

Tipton Town 0 Bromyard 3

TIPTON Town remain winless in the West Midlands Premier as Bromyard Town significantly improved their lowly League position.

The Herefordshire visitors took the lead on 15 minutes through a Brad Birch penalty.

Birch netted his club's second before completing his hat-trick on 40 minutes.

Danks strike earns point for 10-man Tivi

Rugby Town 1 Tividale 1

TIVIDALE produced possibly their grittiest 45 minutes of the season to pick up a point at Rugby Town.

Rugby deservedly took the lead when a Kevin Thornton free-kick was headed down by skipper Steve Towers and David Kolodnyski produced a class bicycle kick to fire home through Tom Turner's legs.

On 33 minutes Rob Parker was inches away from doubling the advantage but his effort came back off the post.

Four minutes later Tivi's Lewis Wright was dismissed for bringing down Kolodnyski.

Home keeper Sam Andrews was picking the ball out of his net within a minute of the restart.

A Rugby clearance fell to Mark Danks on the edge of the box and he fired home.

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Sport

Side pays penalty for poor discipline
Page 55

Fitting tribute to boxing's Steve
Page 55

Dismissal no hindrance to Glassboys

Stourbridge 3 Skelmersdale 1

THE Glassboys stepped up their promotion push with a convincing win over Skelmersdale despite being reduced to 10 men for most of the second half.

Stourbridge made all the early running as Skelmersdale defended in depth while relying on lone striker Max Hazeldine to break quickly.

Their plan worked to perfection on 26 minutes when Hazeldine beat Stourbridge's offside trap and chased a ball thumped up the middle of the park by Kenny Strickland before cleverly lobbing home over advancing Glassboys goalkeeper Charlie Price.

Stourbridge soon hit back with two goals in as many minutes. Karl Hawley levelled on 34 minutes with a superbly taken goal – his 20th of the season – latching onto a pass from Matt Dodd with his back to goal and turning two Skelmersdale defenders before firing into the roof of the net.

Havoc

Two minutes later, they went ahead when Hawley again caused havoc in a crowded Skelmersdale goalmouth with two attempted shots on the turn before the ball fell kindly for Dodd to slot home from close range.

Hazeldine continued to prove a threat for Skelmersdale on the break and raced clear again right on the stroke of half-time – but this time he was denied thanks to Price who kept the ball out with his outstretched boot.

The game threatened to turn on its head after 56 minutes when

The Glassboys were a man down after Dodd was sent off for a late challenge on Strickland after 56 minutes.

But Stourbridge continued to impress with 10 men and increased the lead on 62 minutes when central defender Dan Scarr climbed highest to a Leon Broadhurst free kick and headed home.

Helen back in form to come home first for running club

AFTER all the recent cross country action it was a quiet weekend for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club with only three club members pulling on the blue hoops and pinning a number to the vest.

Even then they had to travel some distance to do so.

With not much on the local calendar, those looking for competition travelled to the Coed y Brenin Forest deep in Snowdonia for the Winter Trail Wales.

This is a tough event over muddy trails and fire trails with some significant climbs throughout the half marathon route and rumoured to be much greater than the traditional 13.1 mile distance.

After an enforced break due to injury Helen Tromans was back on form and first back for the club in 123rd overall and sixth in her age group in a time of 1.58.51.

Peter Krivosic claimed 436th place in 2.50.40 and Sarah Krivosic finished in 478th in 3.05.53.

Aston vows to come back fighting

Ahmet Patterson knocks down Ryan Aston

Boxing

DUDLEY'S Ryan Aston vowed to come back fighting after his step up in class went up in smoke on Friday night, **writes Craig Birch**.

Aston's dreams of lifting the IBF International light middleweight title live on BoxNation were destroyed in six rounds by the classy Ahmet Patterson.

Their 12-round bout only went half of the distance, with Aston down once in the fifth and twice in the sixth, with the first knockdown of the sixth ruled a low blow.

It's now back to the drawing board for the 24-year-old, who has lost all three of his major title shots. This belt, which came with a top 15 world ranking with the IBF, followed unsuccesful attempts for the Midlands crown at light middle and middleweight.

'Tank' had also dedicated the fight to Steve Gough, the late vice-president of Priory Park Boxing Club, where he was an amateur and now fights out of the pro section.

Aston said: "I need to learn from this and move on. This was in memory of Steve. It wasn't the result he would've wanted, but I'll be back."

DK ARE DENIED A BONUS POINT

Bournville 28 DK 17

DK travelled to the unique surroundings of Bournville knowing this would be a defining match in their season, a good yardstick to measure against.

Both clubs were relegated last term and are now in the top echelons of the league, pressing for an immediate return.

DK did not get off to the best of starts when Duncan Tompkins put a penalty wide, then, following a good period of pressure, Shef Shillingford took a line close to a ruck and powered over the line.

However, the large travelling DK crowd were soon deflated, and then confused when the try was disallowed. Yet DK were given a five-metre scrum. Apparently, the referee deemed that he had prevented a tackle being made, but those five points would have given DK a losing bonus point, and perhaps changed the whole game.

Bournville then took a 5-0 lead. But DK were soon back on the attack and driving in the Bournville half, when the referee brandished a yellow card to a Bournville forward for an offence at a ruck.

Moments, later Lewis Hannibal was in the bin for a similar offence in the DK half and Bournville kicked the penalty to extend their lead.

Once again DK applied pressure for a prolonged period, but did not convert it into points, only for Bournville to snatch another try before half time for a 13-0 lead.

The third quarter was DK's and a try, converted by Tompkins, saw the deficit reduced. During this time, Bournville had gained another yellow card.

Then, the DK faithful were rewarded for their trip, with a superb try, which Tompkins again converted. DK then took the lead for the first time with a penalty from Tompkins again.

But the momentum switched back to Bournville as Danny Hawkins sustained a nasty injury and had to be replaced.

Next, Ed Parry received a yellow card at a ruck the ensuing penalty was kicked 17-16.

Into the last ten minutes with 14 men, two Bournville tries denied DK a losing bonus point.

DK's Danny Hawkins moves to charge down a Bournville kick

Look Hughes won another darts title

TIPTON'S Jamie Hughes retained his BDO Romanian Classic title on his return to competitive darts after the World Championship.

The Lakeside 2016 semi-finalist went all of the way at the Intercontinental Hotel in Bucharest to claim his sixth BDO ranking title.

Hughes' form gradually rose over the weekend and he was imperious in the final, dropping just a leg in a 6-1 victory over Alan Bell.

'Yozza' snapped into gear from the semi-finals, after opening his challenge with a 4-0 whitewash of Mamix de Beer.

The 29-year-old then overcame another worlds semi-finalist, Chris Mason, a fellow West Midlands resident who lives in Hednesford. Hughes rolled over him 4-1.

Matt Dickinson was beaten 4-2 to set up a semi-final against Krzysztof Ratajski. The Black Country thrower landed two 180s and averaged 91 in a 5-1 win. Hughes is currently ranked fourth by the BDO.

Russell and Giles help Hagley home

Pedmore (117-1) beat Enville 'B' (99 all out) by 18 runs

PEDMORE, in their first game of the 2016 WCB Indoor Cricket campaign, fielded a strong side on paper which may account for them being put in.

The openers showed signs of rustiness, especially Dave Skelding (26 no). Captain Matt Porter (24) was more fluent and kept the score moving. Losing Porter at 66, the experienced James Burgoyne set about the bowling scoring 27, with Skelding still struggling until his retirement in the 10th over. John Herdman added late runs for Pedmore without further loss. Tom Davies bowled his three overs for 27.

Enville B started their reply very cautiously, opening pair Nick Insley and Jon Howells putting on 61 for the first wicket with Howells retiring.

The inexperience of the remaining Enville batsman showed as two run outs followed, reducing Enville to 77-3. The return of the openers gave Enville renewed hope of a victory but two smart run outs by Dan Such ended the innings on 99.

Oldswinford (116-3) lost to Hagley (118-2) by four wickets

OLDSWINFORD openers Harry Stanier (28) and Owen Williams (32 no) ran quickly between wickets.

Stanier retired first, then Tom Blunt (25 no) used his experience before the return of Williams with Blunt enabled a run fest in the remaining three overs.

Hagley in reply started with Joe Lennon (28 no) blasting the ball straight back past the bowlers. At the loss of his partner at 16, Paul Morgan (25 no) joined Lennon in a crucial stand.

Oldswinford slowed the new batsmen and were back in the game until Dan Giles (25 no) added new momentum and guided Hagley home with James Russell.

Defeat deals blow to play-off hopes

Workington 3 Halesowen 0

HALESOWEN'S hopes of making the play-offs suffered a blow with a 3-0 defeat at Workington who improved their own chances by moving into third place.

Workington were two up at half-time thanks to goals from Sam Smith and Gareth Arnison.

Halesowen did improve in the second half although Shaun Rowley was forced to make some good saves to keep Workington at bay.

The home side did increase their lead four minutes from time when Connor Tinnion finished off a neat passing move inside the area.

★★★

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